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BUILDING
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ORGASM**



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DASH DOES
THE HARLEM
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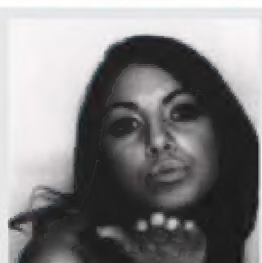
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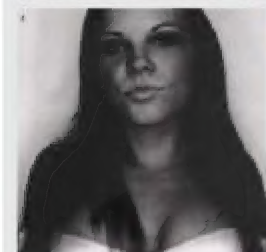
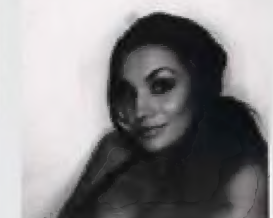
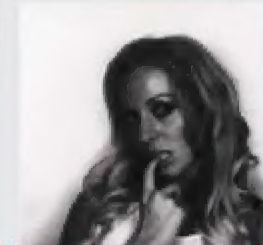
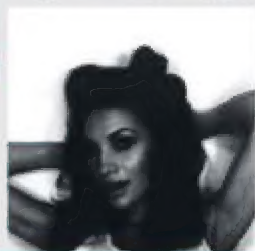
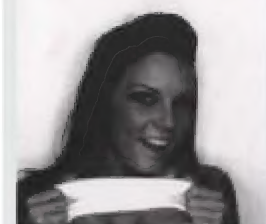
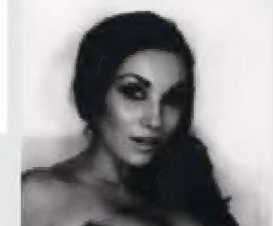
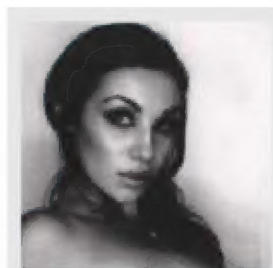
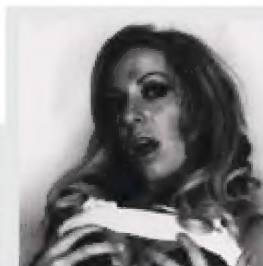
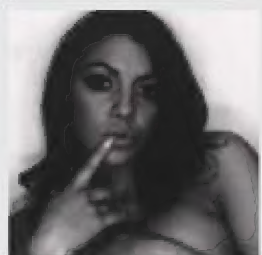
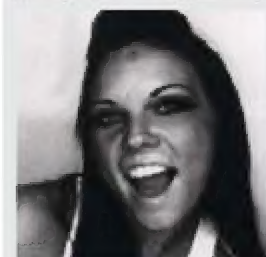
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Editor's note

11/2007

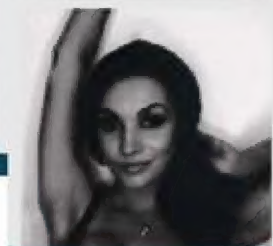


As soon as the shutters started clicking, our five contestants posed, preened, and strutted their stuff with a ferocity that impressed even our jaded staff.



GINA

HEATHER



SENYA

LANA


CALI

W

hat happens when you invite five gorgeous Penthouse Key Girls to New York City, then turn them loose in an East Village bar with a handful of singles and one of those photo-booth machines in the back? You get a lot of competitive posing, a fair number of wardrobe malfunctions, and a bunch of guys snooping around, offering to buy drinks.

The mayhem kicked off in August, when we flew in some of our favorite Key Girls from Penthouse Clubs around the country to compete in our first-ever Key Girl Playoff. And once you get five high-caliber dancers in a studio and in front of a camera, it's best to stow your tray table in its upright position, put your seat back, and enjoy the ride, because things are bound to get crazy. As soon as the shutters started clicking, our five contestants posed,

preened, and strutted their stuff with a ferocity that impressed even our jaded staff. And that was before we took them to the bar.

Each of the girls—Lana from Detroit, Cali from St. Louis, Gina from Chicago, and Senya and Heather from New York—came to kick ass and compete for a chance to be our February Pet of the Month. We just didn't expect them to have such a rowdy good time in the process. Though we've each picked our favorite here in the office, we're leaving it up to you to decide which Key Girl will take home the prize. See page 105 for information on how to text your vote. And don't be surprised to see your favorite in a full Pet of the Month pictorial this February. Until then, enjoy. 



Mark Healy
Editor in Chief



I met James at a convention in Chicago. I first noticed him at one of the seminars. We were sitting across from each other and every time I looked up, I'd catch him staring at me. We'd exchange a smile and then pretend to focus on the presentation, but the only thing on my mind was how it would feel to be alone with him.

Unfortunately, we never had more than five minutes of privacy. And these days, keeping down company expenses means sharing a room with a coworker. James worked in Washington and I worked in New York, so the best we could do was exchange business cards and say, "Nice meeting you—keep in touch."

But two weeks after the seminar, James actually called me. He said he'd been thinking about me and wanted to see me. He wondered if I could take some time off because he could get a great deal on a mini cruise out of New York, but we would have to leave that weekend. It was Friday, the ship sailed the next day, and I'd never done

anything remotely like this, but I really wanted to hook up with him. Just hearing his voice again made me wet.

I told James to e-mail me the details and I'd meet him at the pier the next day. With visions of rampant sex on the high seas, I arranged to take time off and hightailed it to the nearest full-service salon.

On Saturday, I met James at the pier. As soon as we laid eyes on each other, the sparks flew. He looked even better than I remembered, or maybe I was just in lust. It didn't matter—the heat was there and it wasn't one-sided. We embraced at the entrance

I moaned when he broke contact and turned me to face the dresser. He knelt behind me and finally placed his lips where I needed them most.

and locked lips shamelessly until I had to come up for air.

"James, I'm happy to see you, too, but we'd better find our cabin," I said. We checked in and raced to our suite. Once inside, we hung the DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door and tore off each other's clothes.

"What about the luggage?" I asked as his hands roamed over my body and he kissed my taut nipples.

"They'll leave it outside the door," he said, still sucking and nipping at my breasts. I moaned when he broke contact and turned me to face the dresser. He knelt behind me and finally placed his lips where I needed them most. He was all tongue and fingers, coaxing moans and cries from me as I surrendered to the pleasure. If it hadn't been for the dresser, I would have fallen flat on my face.

"James, I need you now!" I said as I gripped the dresser, eagerly awaiting the relief that only a good hard cock could provide.

Right on cue, James stood up, cupped my breasts with his hands, and drove into me from behind. The initial thrust sent a shock wave through me and I came immediately, panting and crying out for him to keep going. And he did. James kept fucking me with a steady rhythm that drove me to the brink of yet another orgasm. When I caught my reflection in the mirror above the dresser, I saw the face of a woman on the edge of a massive climax.

"Kim," James said, "I can't hold out any longer."

"You don't have to," I said as he tightened his embrace and erupted inside me. What an absolute rush! My heart was still racing, but I could barely stand. James was breathing as hard as I was, but he picked me up and carried me to the bed.

I don't know how long we stayed in the cabin before checking out the rest of the ship, but when we did, we got knowing smiles from the other passengers. I couldn't care less—it was all worth it! We did manage to leave the ship when it docked for a day, but most of our time was spent in our cabin or in some secluded corner.—K.D., New York

More letters on page 144

"Forum" letters should carry name and address, though these and other identifying characteristics will be changed for publication purposes. All letters become the property of Penthouse. Send letters to forum.submission@pmgl.com or Penthouse Editorial Dept., 2 Penn Plaza, Suite 1125, New York, NY 10121.

Auto Erotic

Miss Hot Import Nights 2005 Ursula Mayes travels the country revving the engines of hot-rod fanatics as the sexiest MC since that Einstein equation. Check her out this fall as the main model in the racing game *Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights*.



In San Diego, you threw your top into the crowd but expected the guy who caught it to return it. What's his incentive to give it back? That actually ended up being the only time they didn't bring it back! They usually come to the booth and ask for a free calendar or poster. You'd think they'd want that more than a girl's shirt.

You'd think. It's just a fun way to get the crowd going. The girls will come out wearing T-shirts, then whip them off and give them to the crowd.

Do you feel bad when the crowd boos the models? Not really, I just try to keep the crowd positive. When you're emceeing, as long as you let them know it's all about them, they'll stay happy. You're the boss, but you let them think they're the boss.

The main focus of these events is the cars. What's your ride like? I just bought the new Lexus LS 460—the one that self-parks—and I don't want to say this, because I don't want to seem like I'm out there racing, but it goes, like, 60 miles an hour in 5.4 seconds. It's big but it's fast, and I just put 21-inch wheels on to make it look sportier. I also have a hot-pink Nissan 240 SX drift car with a turbo engine, and Volk racing wheels. On my MySpace page, I get more comments on that car than I do on my pictures. It's in the shop right now because a bunny rabbit was living under my hood and chewed up the wires, so it's not starting.

Weird. There's a rumor that if you weren't a model, you'd want to be a professional poker player. Is that true? Oh, yeah. I want to go to the poker tour, the one that's on TV! I used to play a lot of online poker before it was banned.

How's your poker face? I don't really have a poker face because I'm always smiling. I feel girls have an advantage, because they can sit there and smile or act sort of ditz and the guys won't think anything about it, and then they'll be like, *bam!* Royal flush!

You're in *Juiced 2*, but do you actually game? I'm really good at the volleyball version of *Dead or Alive*. I also like *Gears of War* a lot, and growing up, nobody could beat me at *Street Fighter* when I was Chun-Li. I knew all her secret moves.

GARGANTUAN
GAME
PREVIEW

THE GUIDE

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Ursula Mayes starts us up, plus our video-game blowout

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SHOOTERS

The Big Guns

This season's games forgo the bleak environs of past action for lush, vibrant worlds. Jungle scenes are especially popular, so just be sure you don't mow down any endangered species.



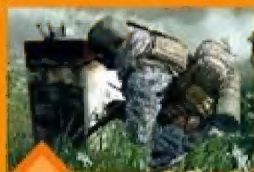
HALO 3 (Microsoft) Xbox 360

Is *Halo 3* the biggest game of the year? Probably. At the very least, it's likely to live up to the hype. The first-person shooter has been marketed in Burger King and 7-Eleven, so you probably already know that Master Chief is back and ready to finish this epic story.

Rocks: The killer, hard-kicking assault rifle from the original;

a multiplayer camera that makes you a veritable small-screen auteur, able to save game data so you can swap the files between friends on Xbox Live or create your own "machinima" clips; reflective bubble shields that protect you from firepower

Flops: This is where the trilogy's main storyline ends.



CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE (Activision) Xbox 360, PS3, PC

This winter, *Call of Duty 4* brings the franchise back to *Call of Duty 2*'s top-notch level, with one tiny change: It takes place in the present day.

Rocks: The ghillie suits look remarkably real, and the modern weaponry shreds when you're peppering enemy soldiers; the friendly fire actually burns.

Flops: *Call of Duty 2* took about 11 hours to blast through, and the team hasn't said if *COD4* will be much longer.



CRYSIS (EA) PC

Powerful armor, stellar graphics, and an ability to create your own levels mean this alien-based shooter rules our gaming galaxy.

Rocks: A "biosuit" that regenerates your character's life, juicing his strength and camouflaging him in the hyper-real-looking North Korean jungles

Flops: Again with the aliens?



UNREAL TOURNAMENT III (Midway) Xbox 360, PS3, PC

The developers of *Gears of War* have made one of the best multiplayer console shooters.

Rocks: The many tricked-out maps that are available in multiplayer mode; Dark Walkers that resemble the long-legged extraterrestrials from *War of the Worlds* and can be used as vehicles; a molten plasma gun that evaporates your enemies

Flops: The multiplayer component is similar to the last *UT*. Shocking, we know.



HALF-LIFE 2: EPISODE 2: THE ORANGE BOX (EA) Xbox 360, Xbox, PS3, PC

This sequel picks up with Dr. Gordon Freeman where *Episode 1* left off, but you'll play in the forest instead of the city.

Rocks: Valve delivers another deep, engaging storyline that answers many plot questions.

Flops: You may have to lean too much on your companion, Alyx, for guidance. A major character dies. We'll give you a hint: It's not Harry Potter.



KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN (Eidos) Xbox 360, PS3, PC

Kane's a backstabbing former mercenary who's been offered a deal he might not be able to refuse. Loose cannon Lynch must determine if Kane can be trusted. Cue extreme tension.

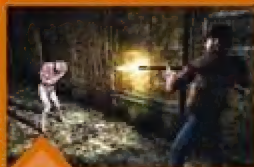
Rocks: Intense mood and entertaining dialogue; brutal combat forces you to question your personal moral code

Flops: You may have to shoot your way through nightclubs full of innocents in this *Heat*-inspired crime drama. Think you can handle that?

Survival Horror

Zombies and the undead rule in this shooter subgenre.

These three freaky titles should be ready by Halloween.



SILENT HILL: ORIGINS (Konami) PSP

Travis O'Grady, whose rig has just broken down, is going to show us where it all began. That doesn't bode well for him.

Rocks: Each weapon has a nasty finishing move; mirrors act as the portal between the waking world and the world of Silent Hill.

Flops: You have to use the finishing move to kill your enemies.



DEMENTIUM: THE WARD

(Gamecock) DS

Don't expect jumpy, I-just-shat-myself moments in the DS's first survival-horror title, just a lingering feeling of dread.

Rocks: Abandoned hospital hallways, roaches crawling the walls, and blood-spattered nurseries provide nightmare-ready imagery.

Flops: Not enough object interaction.



JERICO (Codemasters)

Xbox 360, PS3, PC

Worth the wait—this looks almost as scary as F.E.A.R.

Rocks: Spooky storyline that follows a soldier navigating a rift between hell and earth with a SWAT team; nasty-looking enemies whose gross-out factor is up there with *Hellraiser's* Cenobites.

Flops: Bad timing—you just bought *Halo 3*.

ACTION



Character Driven

Besides the first-person shooters, there also will be plenty of brain-punishing puzzles and brutal enemies in this season's action-adventure games.



THE SIMPSONS GAME

(EA) Xbox 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, PSP, DS

The most complete *Simpsons* game yet—play everyone from Bartman to Maggie.

Rocks: The cast voices a storyline penned by the geniuses behind the TV series; it supports drop-in/drop-out co-play, so your friends can try out Lisa's powerful Hand of Buddha; you get to explore Springfield.

Flops: No online multiplayer function.

Extra-Sweet: Matt Groening is the final boss.



SUPER MARIO GALAXY (Nintendo) Wii

The portly plumber and friends are back in the first traditional Mario game since *Super Mario Sunshine*, this time with a mind-bending outer-space adventure.

Rocks: It's an updated version of everything we love about old-school Mario; we never tire of planet-hopping or spin-attacking goombas and other assorted bad dudes.

Flops: At times the camera is disorienting nearly to the point of motion sickness.

Rivals: The awesomeness that was *Super Mario 64*.



UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE (Sony) PS3

Jak and Daxter creators come up with an action-adventure instant classic starring a treasure-hungry fortune hunter.

Rocks: Melee combat means you can kick your enemies in the balls or slam their face into a rock wall; amazingly accurate grenade throwing.

Flops: Some moments feel raided from *Lara Croft*.



ASSASSIN'S CREED (Ubisoft) Xbox 360, PS3, PC

There wasn't anything fun about the Crusades, as you'll see when you play an assassin who must murder nine citizens responsible for continuing the holy wars.

Rocks: It's heavy on action, but it's not a button masher. Instead, you're required to parry and defend. Smart enemies are not easily avoided once you piss them off.

Flops: If you're too slow, some key foes will wait for you to catch up. So what's the point of the chase?



HEAVENLY SWORD (Sony) PS3

We love fiery redheads—even when they come with baggage. Nariko defends her village from hordes of villains before an enchanted sword drains her life.

Rocks: She can perform a variety of different attacks depending on her fighting stance; her outfit makes it clear why the swordplay genre is called fantasy.

Flops: A touch of magic would have made the battles even better.

Q&A



Oh, Boy!

Hellboy comic creator Mike Mignola tells us why his cigar-chomping character from the fiery depths makes a good role model.

When you greenlit the creation of a second *Hellboy* video game, did you have concerns about the character's design? The beauty of the game is that it's more a spin-off of the film, so I'm distanced from it and not worrying about the way they draw Hellboy's legs. Some characters have only been in the comic, so it's fun seeing them 3-D-modeled for the game, which makes them realistic.

Who's new?

Almost all the bad guys are new. One lifted from the comic was a Nazi head in a jar and his Frankenstein-like gorillas. There's also one good guy from the comic, Lobster Johnson.

Was Guillermo del Toro the right director to take *Hellboy* to the big screen?

It was clear as soon as I met him that he was the right guy. I had seen two of his movies—*Cronos* and *Mimic*—and I love the feel of his stuff. He has such a peculiar sensibility. He's making art films about giant bugs and monsters. That's kind of the sensibility I have. I didn't want someone who was going to make a straight horror movie or action movie. I wanted a guy who really thought this weird stuff was beautiful.

Should guys want to be Hellboy?

Hellboy is a good guy. He's not Wolverine, he's not Batman, but the problem is ... he may be the Beast of the Apocalypse. The thing with being Hellboy is that somewhere down the line, that's going to be a real problem [laughs].

And a relationship killer.

You'd have to worry who you're waking up next to.

Would Hellboy be a gamer?

My Hellboy would play poker with Tom Waits and a bunch of hobos around a campfire.

SPORTS

Adrenaline Rush

Many sports-franchise champs return this year—but now there's stiff competition.



SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL (Nintendo) Wii

Fight Night Round 3 and *Wii Sports*'s boxing are technical knockouts, but nothing beats whomping Solid Snake's ass as Link.

Rocks: Characters from *Fire Emblem*, *Kirby*, *Metal Gear*, *Warrior*, and *Kid Icarus* join the cast, and you can take your skull-rattling skirmishes online; new features let you summon wicked creatures, such as a hammer-throwing turtle or a Nintendog, to help win the battle

Flops: We've been skeptical about the side-scrolling single-player mode since *Mortal Kombat*'s nightmare-inducing single-player campaign.



Skate or Die!

Tony Hawk is still cruising the skate park, but there's a young upstart hitting the halfpipe. Which game shreds more?



TONY HAWK'S PROVING GROUND (Activision) Xbox 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, DS

The new video-editor feature lets you splice together up to two minutes of your sweetest jumps (or nastiest falls).



SKATE. (EA) Xbox 360, PS3

No video editor, but the dynamic graphics and multiple camera angles capture all the truck-shrieking madness.

TIE: The editor function will mean something to hard-core gamers, but we dig *Skate*'s realistic look.

CASTING CALL

Three different classes of skaters—Hardcore, Career, and Rigger—want more than just turning pro. Sponsorship even!

CASTING CALL

Eighteen pros, each with their own style. **WWE'S SMACKDOWN VS RAW** (THQ) Xbox 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, PSP, DS

GRIND CONTROL

Analog-stick action is back with Nail the Trick, Grab, and Manual modes.

GRIND CONTROL

Forget the butt-knocking about wrestling. Not easy—Rock of Smashdown!

ADVANTAGE ▶ *SKATE*: We'd love to take a break from chained button punching and try something new.

TOUR

Washington, D.C.; Baltimore; Philadelphia

opponents to the mat. **Wii-style** feels awesome; the struggle-submission system requires **button** against chokes and **submission**

ADVANTAGE ▶ *HAWK*: Fantasy chases can be fun playgrounds, but we'd rather pound forbidden real-life pavement, like Baltimore's Inner Harbor and Philly's LOVE Park.

VERDICT ▶ *Skate* catches a tad more air than *Hawk*—it's the competition Activision needs to trick out *Hawk* again.



NBA 08 (Sony) PS3, PS2, PSP

Nothing like a little b-ball to take your mind off getting creamed in *Madden*.

Rocks: The improved Sixaxis controls let you take it to the rack with speed and precision. A replay feature offers downloadable challenges based on real NBA highlights.

Flops: Different uniform options? Keep it real, please.



WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW

(THQ) Xbox 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, PSP, DS You don't have to be a grappling guru to know that wrestling rules.

Rocks: Slamming your opponent to the mat. **Wii-style** feels awesome; the struggle-submission system requires retaliation against chokes and sleepers

Flops: There's still no "Bed the Divas" mini game.

BEST OF THE REST

Console Yourself

Put these role-playing games, music titles, and party games on your must-have list.



MASS EFFECT (Microsoft) Xbox 360

This is the first title in a space-based action role-playing trilogy.

Rocks: An impressive storyline and graphics so strong, you feel as though you're watching the Sci-Fi channel. Combat occurs in real time with futuristic weapons, and while the AI controls your squad's movements, you can issue general commands to keep them in line.

Flops: No multiplayer—space battles would be stellar.

Closest Cousin? The Star Wars trilogy



HELLGATE: LONDON (EA) PC

Our new definition of hell is trying to survive a post-apocalyptic London where demons roam free.

Rocks: The character design and customization options are wicked cool. The eerie, desolate environments are ideal for blasting hell spawn, either alone or in co-op mode.

Flops: The demons look killer, but you're stuck playing on the good guy's side. Life is hard when you can't find a decent place to get shepherd's pie.



RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS 2

(Ubisoft) Wii, DS
Rabbids are trouble. In their first game they made Rayman's life hell, and now the plunger-happy bunnies are at it again with 70 mini games that will have you flailing your Wii like an epileptic traffic cop.

Rocks: The mini games are sure to be a hit with your drunk friends—especially the one where you have to spit into a pint glass from a floor above the bar.

Flops: Party games, even this one, get old fast if you're playing them on your own.



STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT: RENEGADE SQUADRON (LucasArts) PSP

Hard-core Han Solo fans and casual Starwatchers alike will feel this game's potent force.

Rocks: You can customize a Wookiee warrior to your liking with such otherworldly weapons as the carbonite freeze gun; missions are land- and space-based, though we don't want to talk about how many times we crashed our TIE Defender and Slave 1 trying to take out Boba Fett.

Flops: The steep learning curve for graceful maneuvers

Battle of the Bands

Would you rather nail guitar solos on your own or sing along to Bon Jovi's "Wanted Dead or Alive" while your friends jam along behind you? How you answer will determine whether you're better suited to *Rock Band* or *Guitar Hero III*—and how much of a geek you really are.



ROCK BAND (EA) Xbox 360, PS3

PRICE

\$200

GEAR

Microphone, Fender Stratocaster guitar replica, four-piece drum kit

STAR FEATURE

You or one of your friends will have to sing, but since the focus of *Rock Band* is on full albums, you can always go for those more obscure tracks.

ONLINE

Multiplayer or four-person co-op

GUITAR HERO III: LEGENDS OF ROCK

(Activision) Xbox 360, PS3, Wii, PS2

PRICE

\$100

GEAR

Gibson Les Paul guitar replica (Gibson Kramer Pacer for PS2 users)

STAR FEATURE

Challenge bosses like Slash in campaign mode.

ONLINE

Go pick to pick against another ax man.

Playlists

WEEZER

"Say It Ain't So"

METALLICA

"Enter Sandman"

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

"Go With the Flow"

BLUE OYSTER CULT

"(Don't Fear) the Reaper"

THE WHO

"Won't Get Fooled Again"

WEEZER

"My Name Is Jonas"

METALLICA

"One"

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

"3's and 7's"

BLUE OYSTER CULT

"Cities on Flame"

THE WHO

"The Seeker"

Bonus Tracks

BON JOVI

"Wanted Dead or Alive"

THE HIVES

"Main Offender"

THE RAMONES

"Rockaway Beach"

DAVID BOWIE

"Suffragette City"

NIRVANA

"Nevermind"

GUNS N' ROSES

"Welcome to the Jungle"

IRON MAIDEN

"The Number of the Beast"

SMASHING PUMPKINS

"Cherub Rock"

SLAYER

"Raining Blood"

SLIPKNOT

"Before I Forget"

REVIEWS



War Torn

Tommy Lee Jones goes Oscar hunting in the Valley of Elah

IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH

Tommy Lee Jones, Charlize Theron, James Franco, Susan Sarandon

We understand if you saw director Paul Haggis's much-hyped *Crash* and thought to yourself, *Eh*. But have we got good news for you: His follow-up is much, much better. In fact, it's a masterful, moody detective story that might just earn him another Oscar. At the film's core is the craggy-faced brilliance of Tommy Lee Jones, who ambles into stoic Eastwood territory here as the ex-military dad of an Iraq War soldier killed under mysterious circumstances. Facing a father's worst nightmare, Jones plays a decent man questioning the very foundations of his faith in God and country. Prowling the Southwestern landscape for clues while on the verge of a complete

meltdown, Jones elevates his performance to the rarified air of *The Searchers*-era John Wayne, or maybe *Office Space*-era Ron Livingston. Yes, he's that good. And what about that title? It's biblical, referring to the place where David got his slingshot on. Our advice to Goliath: Stay out of Tommy's way. —Joshua Rothkopf

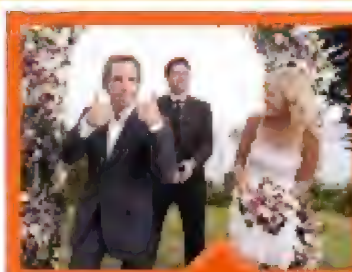
At the film's core is the craggy-faced brilliance of Jones, who ambles into stoic Eastwood territory as the father of an Iraq War soldier killed under mysterious circumstances.



WE OWN THE NIGHT

Joaquin Phoenix, Robert Duvall, Mark Wahlberg, Eva Mendes

Taking its title from the (bad-as-but-debatable) motto of an eighties NYPD street-crime unit, *We Own the Night* features a super-tight A-list cast. Phoenix, as the prodigal son, is especially strong. The film's gritty, grimy look works well, too, effectively capturing the late eighties, when Russian mobsters were flooding New York City with narcotics and brazenly taking out cops whenever the spirit moved them. Throw in a few impossibly tense action sequences, and you have the makings of a memorable police procedural. But an undercooked script and several narrative soft spots undercut the film's power. If you're willing to overlook some plausibility problems, *Night* slings plenty of thrills, including—hey, we're *Penthouse*, we'd be remiss to not mention it—the exceptionally alluring Eva Mendes. —John Rolster



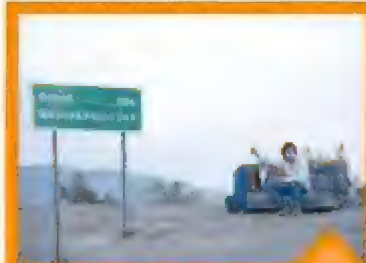
THE HEARTBREAK KID

Ben Stiller, Michelle Monaghan

It's not necessary to know that this is a remake of a seventies comedy starring Charles Grodin, back when he was still funny. But let's get that out there anyway, along with the fact that the Farrelly Brothers continue a nearly decade-long slump. To its credit, this is a sex comedy that actually features some funny, even riotous sex. Ben Stiller, neurotic as ever, marries the wrong girl and, on their honeymoon in Mexico, endures frenetic fornication; you'll come to know why it's sometimes called *banging*. Of course, an angel of mercy is also in Cabo San Lucas, and you can see second thoughts swirling the moment she enters the scene. Fortunately, that angel is played by the lovely Michelle Monaghan, deeply underrated as a comedienne—check out *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* for proof. Even if the script's on autopilot, Monaghan's the beacon that brings it home. —J.R.



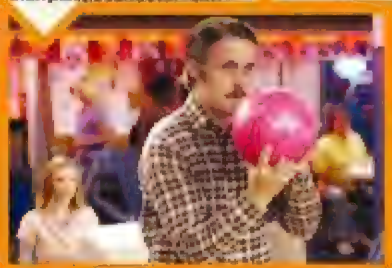
We Own the Night slings plenty of thrills—including the delicious Eva Mendes.



LARS AND THE REAL GIRL

Ryan Gosling, Patricia Clarkson

In this quiet, wintry indie, Gosling plays Lars, a painfully shy guy who winces at the slightest touch. Lars lives in his married brother's garage and barely speaks a word until, he meets the love of his life, a comely brunette named Bianca. After a brief online flirtation, she arrives via wooden shipping container: a life-size blow-up doll. Don't laugh: What could have been *Me and My Sex Toy* is, very carefully, not at all. The script (by *Six Feet Under*'s Nancy Oliver) doesn't settle for the puerile, instead focusing on a lonely guy's delusions, as well as the townies who unite to help one of their own. It's a touching testament to the power of community. Beautifully restrained and a huge success for Gosling, *Lars and the Real Girl* is much more concerned with flesh-and-blood hearts than plastic surfaces.—J.R.



SLEUTH

Michael Caine, Jude Law

Kenneth Branagh is doing the seemingly impossible: making films that are actually more boring than theater. His new film tastes a lot like medicine. It's an Anthony Shaffer thriller about a wealthy, arrogant novelist (Caine); a younger, cuckolded journalist who's *schtupping* Caine's wife (Law); and the country estate that serves as the setting for the ensuing game of mouse and mouse. *Sleuth* is nothing more than a whirring contraption of arbitrary plot developments, stunted by the most deliberate Delivery. Of lines. Ever. (Credit this bit of modernist nonsense to playwright Harold Pinter.) You've seen both leads in better films; when these two Alfies go head to head, the effect is a reverse alchemy that turns dramatic gold into lead.—J.R.

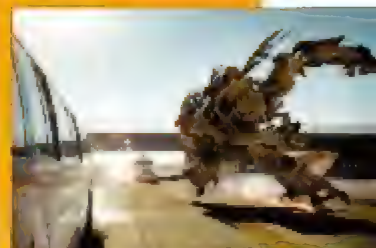
INTO THE WILD

Emile Hirsch, Vince Vaughn, Catherine Keener

Important movie season alert! As we head into film's serious months, quality-control ace Sean Penn has a new one, which he wrote and directed but doesn't appear in. The drama is about man's uneasy relationship with nature—and that's not just us waxing metaphorical; it really is about that. Based on the true-life adventures of an Emory University grad who in the early nineties trekked through Alaska on a dangerous path of self-discovery (recorded in the best-selling book by Jon Krakauer), the movie is crammed with enough camping, climbing, and rapids-shooting to qualify as an *Outward Bound* training film. (Set to some transfixing folk songs by Eddie Vedder, it can feel hippyish, but in a good way.) The real reason, though, that we know we can safely reinsert our brains after a summer of enjoyable mindlessness is *Into the Wild*'s terrific acting, the kind that shakes you to attention. Most noteworthy is Emile Hirsch (*Lords of Dogtown*), who totally commits to Penn's rugged vision. When Hirsch is a marquee-mugging star someday, he'll remember this flick as the turning point.—J.R.

DVDs: On the Homefront

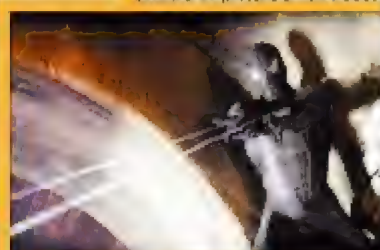
With the high-def format war still raging, these summer blockbusters force you to pick a side. By Barbara Rice Thompson



TRANSFORMERS

Paramount

If you want high-def robots in disguise, you have to go HD—DVD over Blu-ray. The two-disc edition and the HD version feature docs on the evolution of the robots, the vehicles, and the real-world weapons. The HD adds an on-screen Heads Up Display text commentary with picture-in-picture B-roll video.



SPIDER-MAN 3

Sony

This round goes to Blu-ray. The two-disc special edition and Blu-ray version both include two commentary tracks (one with director Sam Raimi and the main cast) and featurettes on everything from the stunts and love triangles to the villains, each of whom gets his own behind-the-scenes special.



KNOCKED UP

Universal

One of the year's best comedies is out in a two-disc unrated edition—and with a filthy-mouthed Judd Apatow movie, unrated is always the way to go. Bonus features include video diaries, a topless version of the restaurant scene, and Seth Rogen and Paul Rudd getting down with Vegas strippers.

STARLET FEVER

Pretty Persuasive

We've fallen under Evan Rachel Wood's spell—and we can't get up.

Yes, it's tempting to pigeon-hole Evan Rachel Wood as trophy jailbait. She was still teething, after all, when her now 38-year-old boyfriend (more on him soon) began marinating his liver in absinthe. But she's no ordinary rock-star-dating A-list groupie. For starters, can you imagine Kate Hudson with Wood's inner-thigh tattoo—a heart slashed in half by a thunderbolt symbolizing her love for Manson and David Bowie? Didn't think so.

Whereas most young actresses begin their careers by building a family-friendly persona (see the once-cute Lindsay Lohan in *Freaky Friday*), Wood is approaching household-name status by doing just the opposite—elegantly unfurling her 20-year-old middle finger at mainstream Hollywood. She consistently delivers exceptional performances in what could be, in the wrong hands, career-torpedoing roles. And, she often does it with very little clothing on. Take, for example, her lip-nibbling seduction of Edward

Norton's *Down in the Valley* character: Wood hooks him—and us—when she flashes her hurricane eyes and reveals the dainty pink bikini beneath an unbuttoned shirt.

Wood works her Lolita image—see the Stanley Kubrick-inspired glasses she sports in boyfriend Marilyn Manson's video for "Heart-Shaped Glasses"—even as she's diligently clearing her mantel for future statuettes. James Woods, for one, is on to her. "He keeps calling me the Meryl Streep of my generation," the young actress has said of her *Pretty Persuasion* (2002) costar. "And I'm like, 'Dude, that's intense.'" It may be, but are you going to doubt James Woods? The man clearly knows from young flesh.

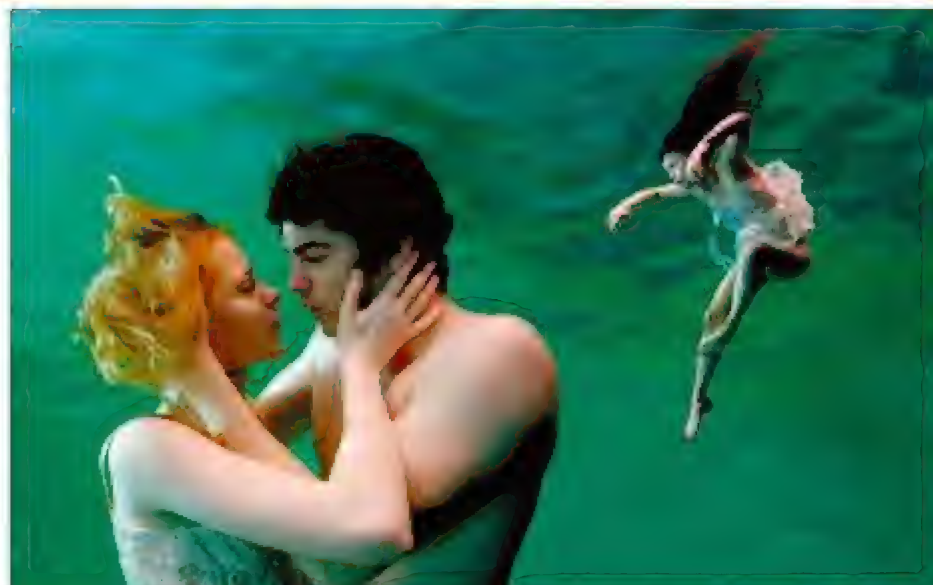
An L.A.-raised tae kwon do black belt, Wood has cultivated a peculiar and diverse résumé that's teeming with successful runs through risky material. While most 12-year-olds dream of joining the Mickey Mouse Club (here's looking at you, Britney), Wood's breakout role was in 2003's *Thirteen* as a shoplifting teen who experiments with drugs and sex. By then, she had already played the shy, vulnerable daughter of a divorced dad in the award-winning ABC series *Once and Again*, and she'd

While most 12-year-olds dream of joining the Mickey Mouse Club, Wood's breakout role was in 2003's *Thirteen*, playing a shoplifting teen who experiments with drugs and sex. It's been all twisted temptresses since.





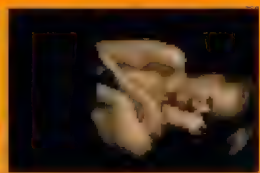
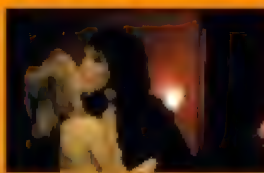
Left: Wood's new Hanson-approved look. Right: Gifted enough to make out under water in *Across the Universe*; with *The King of California*, a heavily hirsute Michael Douglas.



shared the screen with Al Pacino in *Simone* (2002). All of which was just her warm-up act: In 2005, Wood played an underage femme fatale in the aforementioned *Down in the Valley*. Last year, she morphed into a hilariously unhinged existentialist in *Running With Scissors*. This fall, she sings and dances in the admirable (if occasionally ill-executed) Beatles musical *Across the Universe* before ratcheting up the intensity by portraying a high school girl traumatized by a Columbine-like massacre in this winter's indie thriller *In Bloom*.

Wood is the anti-Mandy Moore. She skips the aspartame-flavored rom-coms for roles in films with no sugar added. Sure, she can play the goofy romantic, but she also can be intense, sexy, and vulnerable—often in the same scene.

As long as Wood's on-screen choices remain as beguiling and bizarre as her taste in boyfriends, we'll continue to follow this dangerous temptress farther down the rabbit hole. Which brings us to her next slated project, *Phantasmagoria*, Manson's psycho-horror interpretation of Alice's *Adventures in Wonderland*. Wood's role? A twisted and seductive take on Alice. But you probably could have guessed that. ☛



FIRE OF HIS LOINS

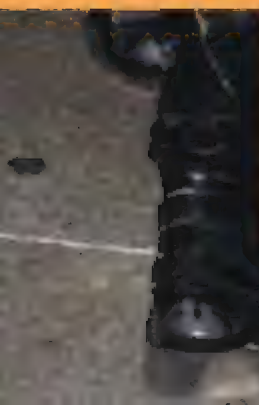
Wood went all Lolita for beau Manson's freaky sex video

Believe it: Marilyn Manson's "simulated sex" scene with Wood is tainting America's innocent children. Again. The vampiric shock rocker's controversial video *Heart-Shaped Glasses* is based on Stanley Kubrick's pedophilic *Lolita*—and stars Manson's

inspirationally young girlfriend, Evan Rachel Wood. Even if you've been too busy watching *Dancing With the Stars* to follow world events, you've likely seen the video or heard about the media wildfire it ignited.

In case the gossip rags didn't clarify the confusion, here's the gist: Manson and Wood doggedly swap spit and grope each other's nude body; Wood climaxes as Manson

grips her neck. The couple speeds along a highway; Wood steers with her foot, puts a knife blade in her mouth. Marilyn's concert performance so transfixed Wood, she is compelled to touch her nether regions. Then, the two lethargically consummate their relationship as blood rains down on them. And ... scene.



REMOTE CONTROL

Cable Ready

The network's new failures are already dropping off the air, so now is the perfect time to pick up a cable habit. Here are our returning favorites for your consideration.

COMEDY CENTRAL



SOUTH PARK

Wednesday, 10 P.M.

Backstory

If you don't know what this show is about, we're genuinely worried about you. Four Colorado preteens create all kinds of trouble. Political incorrectness perfected.

Where we left off

The boys drove all the homeless folks in town to California.

This season

Details are fuzzy, but this we do know: It's going to be funny.

Why watch it

After a bit of a slump a few seasons back, the show is as caustic and hilarious as ever. For proof, check out that "Night of the Living Homeless" episode.

Whyskip it

You hate laughter.

THE SARAH SILVERMAN PROGRAM

Thursday, 10:30 P.M.

Backstory

Sarah Silverman plays Sarah Silverman (um, but not herself) as she takes viewers through odd events, including the occasional musical number.

Where we left off

Sarah lost a farting contest and had a fling with God.

This season

She accidentally joins an anti-abortion group and meets up with God again.

Why watch it

Sarah would rather run all over the place looking for new batteries for her remote than change channels by hand. That's our kind of girl.

Whyskip it

Sarcastic, snarky, sexy women are not your type.



F/X

NIP/TUCK

Tuesday, 10 P.M.

Backstory

Two Miami plastic surgeons repeatedly make a mess of their lives outside the OR.

Where we left off

The practice was sold; Sean's unborn son is going to have health problems; Christian was fucking his psychiatrist (Brooke Shields).

This season

The docs are setting up new digs in the plastic-surgery capital of the world, Beverly Hills; expect cameos from Nicole Kidman, Sandra Bullock, and *Arrested Development*'s Portia de Rossi.

Why watch it

These guys are constantly surrounded by boobs, butts, and as many willing women as they can handle.

Whyskip it

Yes, there's the nudity and constant sex, but there's also an unmistakable chick-show whiff.



The *Nip/Tuck* guys are surrounded by boobs, butts, and as many willing women as they can handle.

Dexter's cache of dismembered bodies is discovered, and he's quickly dubbed the Bay Harbor Butcher.



SHOWTIME

DEXTER

Sunday, 9 P.M.

Backstory

A blood-splatter expert for the Miami Dade PD indulges his sociopathic tendencies as a vigilante, specializing in killing criminals who slip through the cracks of the justice system.

Where we left off

Dexter offed the Ice Truck Killer, who eluded police throughout season one; his girlfriend's ex wants to keep their kids away from Dexter.

This season

Dexter's cache of dismembered bodies is discovered, and he's quickly dubbed the Bay Harbor Butcher. His colleagues who thought he was the Ice Truck Killer are still suspicious. His girlfriend's mom (JoBeth Williams) fails to fall for his charm.

Why watch it

Michael C. Hall is charming, creepy, and compelling; Keith Carradine joins the cast as an FBI agent hunting the Butcher.

Why skip it

Don't. Forget NBC — this is must-see TV. You might hate yourself for loving Dexter, but love him you will.

BROTHERHOOD

Sunday, 10 P.M.

Backstory

Two Irish-American brothers in Providence—a politician and a gangster—each try to run their neighborhood in his own way.

Where we left off

Michael, the thug, was almost beaten to death; Tommy, the pol, tried to keep his corruption under wraps and his party-hearty cheatin' wife under control.

This season

Six months later, Michael is still recovering and still trying to find out who attacked him; Tommy has to deal with an investigation by the attorney general.

Why watch it

It's well-acted, gritty, and realistic; popular *West Wing* alum Janel Moloney is on board for four episodes.

Why skip it

It's not that original.

TV ON DVD

As the 2008 election season heats up, the war in Iraq will be debated endlessly. A new documentary puts a face on our soldiers' sacrifices.



ALIVE DAY MEMORIES Home From Iraq

This documentary from Executive Producer James Gandolfini provides an insightful look at modern-day veterans and the unique obstacles they face. Through Gandolfini's interviews with ten soldiers and marines (of the more than 25,000 wounded in Iraq), we learn how they and their families are dealing with amputations, permanent brain damage, post-traumatic stress, and other injuries that make it difficult, if not impossible, for them to return to their lives. The good news for our troops is that twenty-first-century medicine makes it possible for 90 percent of the wounded to survive; the downside is, returning veterans are more critically injured than those of previous generations. This means these vets will require extensive post-military services from the government. After listening to them talk about what they've been through, you'll come away determined to make sure they get the assistance they deserve.



BLADE

House of Chthon

This isn't Spike TV's 12-episode series. Rather, it's the two-hour extended pilot—described as "too graphic for TV"—which means more post-Iraq Krista (the lovely Jill Wagner). Unfortunately, you won't get to enjoy her bloody sex scene with Neil Jackson or the lesbian undertones of every conversation she has with Jessica Gower.



DIRTY JOBS

Collection One

Mike Rowe may have the dirtiest job of all: He documents just how much filth some folks put up with to make a buck, but still treats each job with respect and a healthy dose of humor. This features 21 of the dirtiest gigs, including sewer inspector and monkey caretaker, plus the "100th Dirty Job Special."



THE SOPRANOS

Season Six, Part Two

Relive the show's love-it-or-hate-it passing. The fevered finale of Tony's tale of two families was controversial and totally gripping. Still, unless you've already popped for the earlier seasons, rent this and wait to see if HBO drops a full-series set. We're suckers for good packaging.

Ten soldiers and marines talk about amputations, permanent brain damage, and other injuries.

Q&A

Power Serj

On his first solo record, System of a Down's lead singer finds himself between prog-rock and a hard place.

Had he not sought a life of rock, Serj Tankian surely would be the coolest time-management lecturer on the circuit. Between writing albums with System of a Down, going before Congress to speak out against Turkey's denial of an Armenian genocide, leading the nonprofit organization Axis of Justice, and running his own record label, Tankian found the time to record his own solo album: the powerful, throbbing *Elect the Dead*. Hey, Serj, we've got a garage that needs cleaning!

You've just released your first solo album, and a lot of people are going to compare it to your work with System of a Down. How is it different?

I've blended a lot of classical music vibes with orchestra vibes and swing Spanish vibes. There are still political and symbolic themes, but there's also a lot about personal pain and transcendence. I think it's more intimate and vulnerable than anything I've done with System. Musically, I think it's more layered. It has more of a big band kind of sound, and it's more orchestral in terms of musical arrangement. It's not just the heavy guitar coming in and this big sound underneath.

Is metal the new jazz?

First of all, I think you're giving way too much credit. I don't consider my music complex. This is my pop album [laughs]! I swear! I love jazz, but I don't know if metal is the new jazz. Progressive rock might be the new jazz of the rock world. I think progressive rock is the closest thing to Ornette Coleman I've ever heard.

System of a Down's videos are often controversial—"Boom!" for instance, protested the Iraq war and was directed by Michael Moore. Will there be videos for *Elect the Dead*?

Besides the videos we're doing for the singles, we're doing indie videos for each song, each one directed by a different friend of mine. I'm interested in their take, their interpretation of how the music makes them feel. I haven't even asked for treatments. Sometimes they just send me two or three lines on what they're going to do, and I'm like, "Yeah, sounds great, go for it!" I'm interested in multiplying the art, not just producing my own and putting it out there.

Who are some of the directors?

Jose Rivera who wrote *The Motorcycle Diaries*, he's doing one of the songs. Gariné Torossian, she's an award-winning short film director who's amazing at making stills move in really crazy, beautiful ways. She did a ten-minute piece on the dual disc for *Mezmerize*. My friend Roger Kupelian, he was basically the top digital designer on *The Lord of the Rings*. I can't wait to see that one!

The song "Lie Lie Lie" has a different vibe than most of the album. I thought that might make an interesting video.

That's the kookiest song on the record. That song used to have serious lyrics, and it just wasn't working. The producer in me had to tell the artist in me to go back and improve it and start something from scratch. I made it this cabaret verse meets dramatic, operatic chorus, kind of like *Borat* meets *Romeo and Juliet*.

Whoa! Why did you name the album *Elect the Dead*?

The last track on the record is

called "Elect the Dead," and it speaks about being dead. I made it the title track, because I thought it was so somber and represented the [disc's] mood really well. The whole album is rocking and going in all these directions, and then the last song is the heaviest without having any heavy instruments.

Does the name mean anything beyond that?

Usually I leave all those things open to interpretation, because I've heard better interpretations than what I've come up with. But the primary feeling is that our ways of making decisions these days are not very wise. We make decisions based on how people look, how people sound. Yes, also on their voting record if they're in Congress; if they're not, then we have no idea, which is why most senators don't get elected [president]. But there is so much wisdom out there, not just with the living and with our history, but with the non-material world.

At least you're in charge of what happens with your label, Serjical Strike, and the band you signed, Buckethead.

Yeah, we did a Buckethead and Friends record last year and released that totally indie. I'm looking for another opportunity to do something cool with Buckethead—exploring the video-game world. I'm looking for a soundtrack we can do to a video game together. Just something completely nuts.

Do you two ever party without the bucket?

[Laughs] Well, we're nerds. We don't party at all. Ever. We just party with the music and the music just parties with us.

You once released a book of poetry, in which you expressed an interest in moving to Paris and writing a novel. Do you still think about that?

Yeah, I want to do that someday. I don't know if it's still Paris. I'd like to write a book, but I'd have to be free from the music before I'm able to do that, and it's going to be a while before I am free.

"Buckethead and I are nerds. We don't party at all. Ever. We just party with the music, and the music just parties with us."

By Rebecca Swanner



MAIN STAGE



Back With a Vengeance

Metal's favorite troublemakers return with another furious album of blistering guitars, searing vocals, and ... feelings?

The members of Avenged Sevenfold may look hard, but underneath the skull tattoos and artfully ripped Guns N' Roses T-shirts lurk the fragile hearts of big softies. Sure, on the Orange County band's self-titled fourth album, frontdude M. Shadows still bellows tortured tales of bad girls and cowboys over the dueling hack

Now that frontdude M. Shadows is screaming less and crooning more, the cracks in his tough-guy armor are beginning to show.

'n' slash guitars of Zacky Vengeance and Synyster Gates. And yes, the first single, "Critical Acclaim," and the ominous "Brompton Cocktail" (named after a nineteenth-century painkiller made from morphine and cocaine) thrash nearly as hard as anything in the band's metalcore back catalog. But now that Shadows is screaming less and crooning more, a deliberate move he made after the band's first two records left his vocal cords raw, the cracks in his tough-guy armor are beginning to show. On the almost poppy "Afterlife" he cries, "I don't belong here" and even reflects on a pretty sky. Best of all is the eight-minute "A Little Piece of Heaven," a vaudeville-style romp replete with strings and Shadows flashing a previously unseen sense of humor. Who knew?

A BRIEF DISCOGRAPHY

What you've been missing



Sounding the Seventh Trumpet
(Good Life, 2001)
Don't try bringing this dazzling debut onto an airplane—it'll never make it through the metal detector.
Penthouse pick:
"Lips of Decoit"



Waking the Fallen
(Hopeless, 2003)
This fan favorite adds layers of gothic story telling while still managing a few cautious steps toward the mainstream.
Penthouse pick:
"Unholy Confessions"



AVENGED SEVENFOLD
Avenged Sevenfold
Warner Bros. (2007)

Penthouse pick:
"Scream"



City of Evil
(Warner Bros., 2005)
"Bat Country" may have got them on MTV, but the rest of this breakthrough got the attention of screamo fans—though Shadows was no longer screaming.
Penthouse pick:
"Bat Country"

REVIEWS

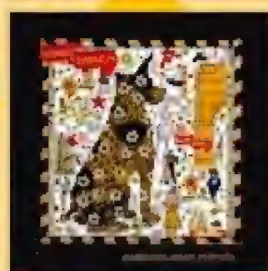


STEVE EARLE
Washington Square Serenade
(New West)

★★★★
After a number of dramatic reinventions—Nashville heilion, reformed folkie, political playwright—Steve Earle has moved to New York City, birthplace of his hero, Pete Seeger. The resulting album is among the best of his long career. It features West Village-meets-working-class laments worthy of Seeger—but the album's best moments are its quietest, especially the lovely, lilting "Days Aren't Long Enough."

COHEED AND CAMBRIA
No World for Tomorrow
(Columbia)

★★★
Shrieky-voiced Coheed frontman Claudio Sanchez's ambition is almost as large as his hair. On this, the prog-punks' fourth album, he attempts to complete the head-scratching, galaxy-spanning sci-fi love story the group has been spinning since their 2002 debut. When Sanchez, with thunder-arm guest-drummer Taylor Hawkins (on loan from the Foo Fighters), locks into a skyscraping chorus, the results are as spectacularly out-of-this-world as he is.



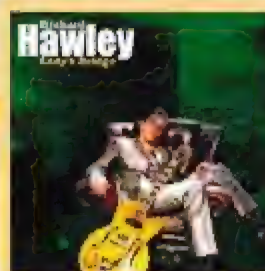
BAND OF HORSES
Cease to Begin
(Sub Pop)

★★★★
Cease to Begin improves upon the band's 2006 debut in nearly every way, thanks to singer Ben Bridwell's uncanny ability to split the difference between his place in Seattle and his hometown digs in South Carolina. His twangy howl narrates cracked tales of haunted mansions, smoke-filled weddings, and wheelbarrows (the South!), while his band lays down epic guitar thunderstorms (the Pacific Northwest!). Geography lessons are rarely so inspired.



RICHARD HAWLEY
Lady's Bridge
(Mute)

★★★★
Richard Hawley, veteran guitarist of Brit-pop acts Pulp and Longpigs, has successfully recast himself as the poet laureate of his hardscrabble hometown: Sheffield, England. On his fourth album, Hawley drenches his rich baritone in washes of strings, crooning bittersweet odes to lost loves, raging rivers, and life on the open sea. Best of all is "Tonight the Streets Are Ours," a lovestruck swoon that sounds like a timeless classic even after only one spin.



THE FIERY FURNACES
Widow City
(Thrill Jockey)

★★
The Fiery Furnaces are nothing if not prolific: The 16-track *Widow City* is the Brooklyn band's fifth full-length in just four years. Yet while the Friedberger siblings have a true MO (busy, bluesy songs packed with more musical ideas and digressions than lyrics), the results frustrate as often as they dazzle. Here, for every tossed-off moment of beauty, there are multiple wonky organ solos. Still, it's a lot better than the album they made with their singing grandmother!

UNDER THE RADAR Good Luck, Chuck.

Former Hot Water Music lead singer Chuck Ragan's solo debut plays more like a meandering stream than a torrential downpour.

After more than a decade together, Florida punks Hot Water Music called it quits last year. Soon after, lead singer Chuck Ragan whet his fans' appetite with *Los Feliz*, a live album featuring songs from his upcoming solo effort, *Feast or Famine*.

On the new record, Ragan doesn't stick to the thrilling, pissed-off punk rock of his old group. Instead, armed with an acoustic guitar and harmonica, he's written a series of softly brooding, melodic tunes. These songs aren't meant for tearing it up in a Greenwich Village club—they'd fit better in a quiet Pacific Northwest coffeehouse. And while at times he struggles to shift genres so violently, Ragan ultimately succeeds by channeling Bruce



Springsteen on certain tracks and reaching out to talented friends, like folk-country singer Jolie Holland, the Pogues' James Fearnley, and Alkaline Trio's Matt Skiba.

If his next solo attempt turns the volume back up, we'll be glad he once experimented with this quieter material. It allows for an intimate glimpse at the heart behind the noise. —Rebecca Swanner



Drawing the Line

Ever since the days of Benjamin Franklin, political cartoons have pissed us off, made us laugh, and sometimes even changed our history. By Edward Sorel

What?! Another book on the history of the American political cartoon? Do we really need one after *Drawn and Quartered* and *Cartoon America*? Well, after reading Donald Dewey's *The Art of Ill Will: The Story of American Political Cartoons* (NYU Press), the answer is yes. At a time when newspapers are endangered, it's important to be reminded of the vital role these drawings have played in our history—not only in the creation of such iconic images as Uncle Sam, greedy Boss Tweed, and the eternally

unshaven Richard Nixon, but also in capturing our imaginations and often inspiring our actions.

Dewey interviewed many of today's top editorial cartoonists

At a time when newspapers are endangered, it's important to be reminded of the vital role these drawings have played.

and found that they face the same dilemma their earlier counterparts had to contend with: "Shall I express my beliefs and lose my job, or express my publisher's and lose my soul?"

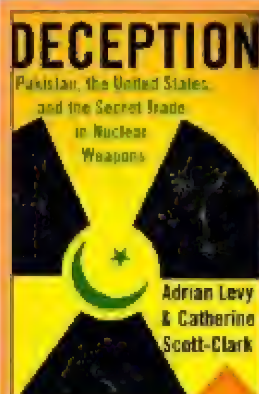
Robert Minor (1884-1952), considered the best editorial artist in the country, never hesitated to put his job on the line. While working as a cartoonist for Joseph Pulitzer's *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, he joined the Socialist Party. In 1911, Minor moved to Pulitzer's *New York World*, but when that paper started flag-waving for World War I, Minor left.

He ended up running for New York City mayor on the Communist ticket. But the only revolution he succeeded in starting was within cartooning. He was the first American to eschew pen and ink in favor of grease crayon on textured paper, a technique that made his drawings look like lithographs and influenced editorial cartoonists for the next 50 years.

One of those converts to grease crayons was Herblock (Herbert Block), who was still turning out a cartoon a day for the *Washington Post* when he died at the age of 91 in 2001. What made Herblock unique was the fact that he had total control over his work, an independence he wrestled from management in the early years of the Vietnam War.

Pat Oliphant—to my mind the most brilliant cartoonist working today—can pretty much say whatever he wishes because he is syndicated, which leaves it up to each paper whether or not to run his work when it goes against their grain. When he arrived from Australia in 1964, he told anyone who would listen that the timidity of American cartoons had made them a laughingstock in other countries. He had a similarly low opinion of the Pulitzer Prizes. At the height of the Vietnam War, he decided to create a cartoon that would be irresistible to the judges. His cynicism was justified. His drawing of Ho Chi Minh holding a dead Vietnamese soldier and saying, "They won't get us to the conference table ... will they?" won the Pulitzer in 1966.

No matter how inspired, any survey like this must end on a sad note. Today's editorial cartoonists are acutely aware that their work is becoming less relevant as newspapers are dying. But at least they still have vehicles for their outrage. All the rest of us can do is scream at the TV as we watch the evening news.



DECEPTION

By Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark (Walker & Company)

There is enough international intrigue in this engrossing exposé to propel a whole new series of spy novels for the twenty-first century. Unfortunately for those of us who have to live in this century, the stories are all too real. The central figure in the book, Dr. A. Q. Khan, a low-level technical translator who became the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb, is worthy of John le Carré. Khan, the "Typhoid Mary of nuclear proliferation," was willing to sell atomic technology to anyone who would pay, including Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and al-Qaeda.

Levy and Scott-Clark successfully meld hundreds of hours of interviews and research into a breathtaking tale of incompetence and blind ineptitude. Despite the desperate efforts of a few investigators, every president from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush has considered Zuckerman vital to our national interests and refused to shut down Khan's operation. And even though he was placed under house arrest a few years ago in a dramatic post-9/11 show of international responsibility by Pakistan's military leader, Pervez Musharraf, Khan's deadly germs continue to proliferate.

Is it too late for us to halt an inevitable slide toward Armageddon? This book doesn't have the answer—but its most depressing conclusion is that no one of consequence is trying. "Pakistan," the authors say, "remains at the epicenter of terror, a disingenuous regime with its hands on the nuclear tiller."—Peter Bloch



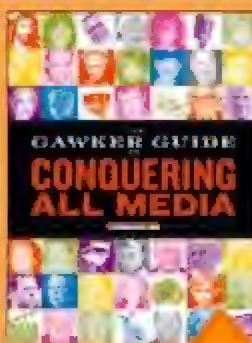
EXIT GHOST

By Philip Roth (Houghton Mifflin)

Seventy-one-year-old author Nathan Zuckerman has been living alone in the mountains for 11 years. He's growing senile; prostate surgery has left him incontinent and impotent; he'll never make love to a woman again. But *Exit Ghost* is a Philip Roth book, so none of his infirmities save Zuckerman from succumbing to a sexual obsession with Jamie, a much younger married woman. (Zuckerman has appeared in nine of Roth's books over 33 years, sometimes as the narrator, other times as a sort of proxy author who Roth has encouraged the reader to confuse with Roth himself.) After coming into New York City for a surgical procedure, Zuckerman meets Jamie, and is overcome both by his desire for her and by the "helplessness of a taunted old man dying to be whole again."

How Zuckerman (and Roth) will reconcile the demands of Zuckerman's libido with the performance his body is unable to deliver is what powers *Exit Ghost*. It's Roth in a familiar mode—a hot blast of id, lust, aggression, and frustration. "Let the belligerence out! Let the intensity out!" Zuckerman cries. "The virile man called back to life. Only"—this time—"there is no virility."

So Zuckerman rehearses his seduction on paper, writing scenes of dialogue between him and Jamie that will make up a book "about knowing where to go for your agony and then going there for it." It's an eloquent gloss on Roth's favorite subject: the unreasonable, implacable pull of a man's sexual appetite, and its paradoxical ability to create life and destroy lives.—Ben Phelan



THE GAWKER GUIDE TO CONQUERING ALL MEDIA

By Chelsea Peretti and Bridie Clark, et al. (Simon & Schuster)

This book is less a guide than an insider's (very) inside book of jokes. If you don't already read Gawker, the popular media and celebrity-gossip Website, you'll probably be more puzzled than amused. If you're familiar with it, you'll recognize Gawker's targets of loathing but laugh anyway. The celeb gossip columnist Cindy Adams most resembles? "If Lucille Ball fucked a Komodo dragon in an Estée Lauder factory." *The Sopranos* is the "first show that said TV could be artful and serious without being hosted by a British pop in a leather chair." Authors Clark and Peretti, along with a host of New York hipster comedians like Fred Armisen and A. D. Miles (and one actual Gawker editor, Emily Gould), only occasionally live up to the must-read status of the online incarnation. After all, how many ways does an NPR pledge drive need to be mocked? (Twenty, according to *The Gawker Guide*.)

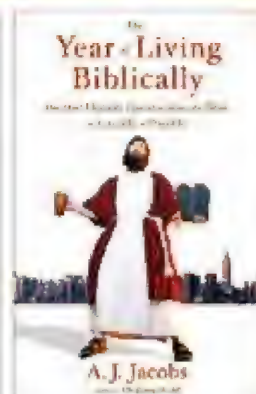
The sample rejection letters, literary-feud crib sheet, tips on taking your mom to the Emmys, and actor/actress to-do lists are some of the highlights. Otherwise, the targets are too easy and the jokes are repetitious. This Howard Stern put-down is just one of many: "If you can find a way to further humiliate the women while naked, such as throwing deli meat at their backside, national syndication is likely." Less stand-up and more snark would've made this book worth turning off your computer to read.—Rachel Kramer Bussel



THE YEAR OF LIVING BIBLICALLY: ONE MAN'S HUMBLE QUEST TO FOLLOW THE BIBLE AS LITERALLY AS POSSIBLE

By A. J. Jacobs (Simon & Schuster)

Old-school Plimpton types call it participatory journalism. Others call it stunt journalism. But however it's known, there's no question this is Jacobs's genre of choice, as the book's clunky, signature subtitle indicates. And yes, he means it: His year passes replete with flowing white garments, a Moses/Rick Rubin beard (see above), and awkward attempts to stone adulterers. At times this breezy account of religious learning feels like a conceit in search of a narrative, and Jacobs's yuppified existential dread over such things as speaking fees and Amazon.com rankings can grate. But just when you might be ready to give up on him, the *Esquire* editor at large and author of the Encyclopaedia Britannica—guzzling *The Know-It-All* charms anew with a truly inspired scene. Take the aforementioned stoning: It's quickly downsized to a pebbling, and things turn nasty when the author meets a cumudgeonly and unapologetic adulterer. "You gonna stone me?" the old



man asks. "If I could," Jacobs replies. "Yes, that'd be great." The man bristles: "I'll punch you in the face. I'll send you to the cemetery." While some readers might have a similar impulse, in the end Jacobs has succeeded at a most difficult task: He's transformed centuries of divisive, dusty dogma into good, clean fun.—Mac Montandon



Budget Bling

Outgrown that drugstore digital but not ready to drop half a year's salary on a Rolex? Pick up one of these for less than \$300 and show up on time for a change.

By Abigail Aronofsky Photographs by Nick Ferrari

Diamonds are not a guy's best friend: If you need a dressier watch, steer clear of ice and opt for sleek and subtle. Clockwise from top left: Ecko chronograph, \$85; Ammon Gold Star, \$110; Breil Milano Limited Edition Globe Italy Chrono, \$295



Unless you coach a swim team, nix the digital-timer wrist watch. These chronographs—a fancy name for watches with timers—are better suited to logging a long lunch than shaving time off your 50-yard freestyle. Left to right: Seiko alarm chrono, \$300; Victorinox Swiss Army Convoy Chrono, \$295; Swatch Green Nectar, \$140

Trading in your round dial for a square one is like swapping your Corolla for a GTI: A square face is definitely cooler, but subtle enough that no one will wonder if you've been watching too many *Queer Eye* reruns. Top to bottom: Vestal Purgatory, \$120; Dolce & Gabbana Time Cream, \$300; EOS Techno, \$70



TRADING IN YOUR
ROUND DIAL FOR A
SQUARE ONE IS LIKE
SWAPPING YOUR
COROLLA FOR A GTI.



For guys who play rough with their timepieces, the more rugged the better. These are water-resistant down to 100 meters or more and feature durable polyurethane bands, so they'll withstand a dip in the pool (or spontaneous shower sex). Clockwise from top: Invicta Skydiver chrono, \$295; Freestyle Funbox, \$85; Freestyle Bandolier, \$135

The Very Good German

Is the new M6 the best BMW ever? Once you get this bad boy out on the autobahn, you may be screaming "Ja!"

By Mike Guy



My older brother had been a dog-loyal BMW hound since 1979, when he bought a shark-nosed 320i with a four-banger, two-liter engine, the bronze paint flaking off the hood. It was a simple, highly tossable car, and it hooked him.

After that he went through an '84 325es and a '92 325is, which he kept for 14 years. When BMW underwent its controversial Chris Bangle-led redesign phase, my brother viewed his 325is as a treasured relic from a forgotten era. "They ruined the brand," he spat. "Too much emphasis on style, not enough on function."

It's a sad story: After 20 years behind the wheel of BMWs, he'll never

have the opportunity to drive the magical, marauding, if frustratingly overengineered 2008 M6 convertible.

It's a shame he will miss it, because the car outpaces a Porsche Carrera to 60 mph, and is more agile than many top-end Italian jobs on the road (and at roughly \$104,000, it's also less than half the price of a Ferrari Scaglietti).

MANY SUPERCARS CAN CORNER LIKE A SAUDI STALLION AND BURN A STRAIGHTAWAY LIKE AN F-16, BUT FEW DO IT AS WELL AS THE M6.

The five-liter V-10 is naturally aspirated; it practically breathes fire. Its torrid 500-horsepower output makes it the most powerful production BMW ever made. This is also the scariest, most exhilarating-ride-of-the-year, go-straight-to-jail car in its class—that is, of course, once you figure out how to drive it.

The worst thing you can say about the M6 is that it's sort of annoying, like an un-neutered puppy always straining at the leash. The electronic systems are so Teutonically overengineered, you'll need a trunk-stashed clipboard just to keep track of all the gadgetry. There's a speedometer alarm, two door alarms, a neutral alarm, and an overly sensitive park-assist chime.

M6 Comparisons HOW DOES THE M6 COMPARE TO THESE OTHER PRICELY COUPES?



CORVETTE Z06

Compared to the meaty grace of the M6, the Z06 is positively thuggish. But at just \$70,000, this 200-miles-per-hour-pegging dynamo is the best supercar buy on the road.



ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE

Aston Martin overcomes its rep for expensive garbage with this dazzling, \$120,000 V-8. The Vantage doesn't have the M6's power, but it's the best-looking car on the road.



Feel safe yet? The laughably small shifter (which will be redesigned in the next iteration) has to be in p to get the key out, but in n to fire up the engine. To control the radio, you must first navigate through the famously byzantine M Drive system, which is inexcusably slow. The cumulative effect of this is distraction. And distraction is not what you want when you're having a come-to-Jesus moment in one of the year's hottest cars.

The legendary shark-nosed Beemer design that my brother loved so much has changed dramatically, though it's retained its marine-biology genes: It's now broad and slightly whale-nosed.

But the M6 interior speaks of dry-land decadence. The leather is lush,

SPECIFICATIONS

Body style	Four-passenger convertible
Engine	Five-liter V-10
Power	500 horsepower
Torque	383 foot-pounds
Transmission	Seven-speed sequential manual gearbox
Suspension	Aluminum double-pivot front struts; four-link integral rear
Wheelbase	109.5 inches
Tires	19-inch front 255/40ZR; 19-inch rear 285/35ZR
Curb weight	3,771 pounds

PERFORMANCE

0-60 mph	4.5 seconds
Top speed	205 mph (without limiter)
Fuel economy	12 mpg city, 19 mpg highway
Price (as tested)	\$114,990

the tender seats hold you in a sporty embrace, and the steering wheel is flawless. In fact, the M6 may well have the most balanced steering on the road. A final subtle touch is the heads-up display, which projects a streamlined feed of speed and engine-revs information onto the windshield in front of the driver.

Many people thought BMW would never recover from its Banglization. But while there are many thoroughbred supercars on the road that can corner like Saudi stallions on 19-inch road slicks and burn a straightaway like an F-16, few do it as well as the M6. Too bad my brother bailed before he could witness it. **A-**



PORSCHE 911 CARRERA

It's unfair to compare the M6 with this lighter, more lithe twin turbo, which produces an absurd 273 foot-pounds of torque, but the more affordable Blimmer wins as a daily driver.



MERCEDES-BENZ CL63 AMG

What you get when you drop an extra \$10,000 on the CL63 AMG: two fewer cylinders, 14 extra horses, and a deeper rumble under the hood. It's also easier on the eyes.



Pet Peeves

The pickup isn't the hardest part of a night out; it's getting the girl to go home with you. May 2007 Pet Andie Valentino tells us how to close the deal. By Jonathan Ages

KISS OF DEATH

"You do not have to make out with a girl before you go home with her. That's so cliché. I don't want to play tonsil hockey with you in front of all of these people. I'm not a bimbo. Just talk to me. I'm not going to bite you ... well, not in the bad way."

LAST CALL

"I think the most appropriate time to invite the girl back to your place is when the music dies down at the club and you see everyone scattering. It's when there's no more dancing or chitchatting to do and you see *the glance*—like, it's you and me, buddy. When she's staring into your eyes, you know you're gonna get some."

PLAY GIRL

"When she invites her whole crew of girls to your place, that's the hint: 'We're not going to fuck tonight.' This girl is going to need a few more shots or a few more dates before you can get in her pants. I'll give you all the damn signs and make you drool all over me, but I'll be like, 'Peace, motherfucker! I'm going home.'"

MOB RULE

"A girl will always glance back at her friends and say, 'Do you approve?' So become friends with her friends. Introduce yourself. You always want to be known as the guy who she called her friends about the next day to talk about how amazing the night was, not as the guy who 'tried to get in my bumhole.'"

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

"There's no fail-safe line. Don't bullshit it. But it will make her comfortable if you ask for her number first. It's a sign that you're not just going to sleep with

her and ditch her. Who cares if you're actually going to call her the next day? Then say, 'Hey, do you want to get out of here?' And for the guy who says, 'I'll make you feel stuff you never felt before' ... fuck that! Buddy, I've been around the block. I've felt all the things I need to feel."

HOME FREE

"Instead of saying, 'Let's get in the cab, go to my house, and bang,' ask her something like, 'My house is a few blocks from here. Do you wanna just walk?' It's so sweet if a guy just asks. And if she starts having second thoughts on the way back to your place, say, 'That's okay, I just really thought we had a connection. I think you are an amazing person.' Even if it's bullshit, who the fuck cares? You're just trying to get in her pants!"

GIRL POWER

"It's always about what the girl wants. We let you think you're in control, but you're really not. You're a guy. You want pussy. She has the pussy. So you have to make the pussy feel comfortable. That's just how it is."

"FOR THE GUY WHO SAYS, 'I'LL MAKE YOU FEEL STUFF YOU NEVER FELT BEFORE' ... FUCK THAT! BUDDY, I'VE FELT ALL THE THINGS I NEED."

Dear Scoundrel,
One of my friends says it's so easy to get laid online that he's nicknamed the dating service he uses "LayDate." It hasn't worked for me, though—I keep hitting on the women who, as it turns out, are chasing after Mr. Right. How can I attract the girls who are just looking for Mr. One Night?—Phil P., California

Weed out those women pining for romance and you will find a digital rain forest full of chicks prowling for jungle love. In fact, most online daters get off on simply being wanted, and love the thrill of the hunt. They're like shoppers peering through virtual storefront windows and occasionally stopping for a quickie in the fitting room. They'll gladly try you on for size and then leave you on the hanger. Translation: At its root, online dating is a mere conduit for casual sex.

So work it like a used-car salesman with a lot full of lemons and a mortgage payment past due. Post the maximum number of pictures allowed (so it doesn't look like you're hiding anything), and make sure each one is great. Include a well-groomed formal-event shot, a casual pic, and a meticulously unstaged "this is me playing" image that will give you something to chat about—ice climb much? Be quirky, but don't say something like "I'm a former professional dart player with a one-eyed dog." Say you love to dance (read: you are good in bed), can cook a mean ahi tuna (read: you're sensitive), and are looking to meet new people (read: hunting for the poontang). And be playfully sexual in your description of the ideal date: "Dinner, drinks, and then ... breakfast?" That'll weed out the husband hunters.

But beware the many pitfalls of the online world. She's probably 20 pounds doughier and three inches less leggy than she appears. You may be better off sticking to bars, offices, and drug-free school zones—the way nature intended.

Dear Scoundrel,
My boss is a total dick and everyone at the office knows it. He dumps his work on me at 5 P.M. and says he needs it first thing in the morning. How can I push to switch groups or get promoted to another position without coming across like a whiny asshole who can't handle the pressure?—Jake R., New York



"six-pack central"

interests:

welding, women, working out, driving fast cars, spending money on ladies

contact me | my kinky videos | my kinky pics

Scoundrel

Words of wisdom from a 21st-century rogue

Openly requesting to switch groups will only make you look like an ungrateful weakling. So take a deep breath, count to ten, and repeat after me: "I ... am ... an ... office ... bitch." Now, doesn't that feel better?

You've got a few options here. Option No. 1: Dust off that résumé, create a more appropriate job-hunting e-mail account than CherryPoppinDaddy@hotmail.com, and start whoring yourself like Diddy at a red-carpet event.

But if you're the type who's sitting on a trust fund and thinks gainful employment is for proletariat suckers, try option No. 2 the next time Lumbergh shits a project on you. Wait till he leaves for the night, then kindly place the assignment on his desk with a box of laxatives and a greeting card that sweetly reads, "I hope this helps you get it out of your system."

Dear Scoundrel,
I cheated on my last girlfriend with my current one. Now she's worried I'm going to cheat on her, too, and leave her for someone else. I've always been faithful to her, but she's suspicious no matter what I do. How do I handle this?—Chris T., Virginia

According to a recent poll by Cosmopolitan magazine, 59 percent of women cheat on men, whereas 55 percent of men cheat on women. Do you realize the implications of these statistics (assuming they're not bullshit, of course)? That's right, 114 percent of people are cheating on each other. People are whores!

A solid relationship can't be built on a foundation of lies. It's a given that if you cheat, then you probably lie, too. And since you cheated on your last girl, you'll likely lie to this one. So she will continue to give you grief—especially every time you leave the area code ("Are you secretly visiting my stepsister?") or your phone goes straight to voice mail ("Are you doing your ex-girlfriend?"). And though you may not know it yet, your current woman's incessant harassment will drive you right back to Infidelityville. Next time you pull the bastard move and sleep with someone else, have the decency to break up with your girlfriend first. You're giving scoundrels a bad name. **CH—E**

ONLINE DATERS ARE LIKE SHOPPERS OCCASIONALLY STOPPING FOR A QUICKIE IN THE FITTING ROOM. THEY'LL TRY YOU ON FOR SIZE AND THEN LEAVE YOU ON THE HANGER.

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO
 SCOUNDREL@PMGI.COM




High Rollin'

You probably order it by name—vodka soda, seven and seven—but in a tall glass it becomes a highball: a name that embodies simple, satisfying drinking.

By Abigail Aronofsky
Photographs by Nick Ferrari

First there's the name, *highball*, which rolls off your tongue like the night's first successful pickup line—at that potent moment when the vise of self-consciousness loosens and suddenly you're chatting up the waitress with legs up to there. Then there's the recipe, simple as can be: the hard stuff, usually whiskey, and a carbonated mixer poured into a tall glass over ice, with no extras beyond a juicy wedge of lime or a twist of orange peel. There's something comforting about the austerity of the ingredients and the knowledge that the bartender will get a highball right whether you're doing it up at the Ritz or slumming at McFugly's. Either way, you get the prickly pleasure of the cold bubbles shooting up your nose, while the heat of the alcohol warms your throat and chest.

Highballs exist in a fizzy Eden of sorts, unsullied by the pretense of a clumsy martini glass or a cheesy name like "sex on the beach." Only the ingredients matter: Whiskey.

Soda. Vodka. Tonic. Gin. Or on a bitter-cold evening, take a cue from the Scots and mix club soda with Drambuie, a scotch-whiskey liqueur infused with honey and spices. It'll make scoring her number as easy as mixing your next highball. 



DRAMBUIE AND SODA

- Top 1.5 oz of Drambuie with club soda over ice in a highball glass
- Squeeze in two lime wedges and drop into the glass

FOODSTYLIST: KARENTEMPLE

THE BARTENDER WILL
GET A HIGHBALL RIGHT
WHETHER YOU'RE AT
THE RITZ OR MCFUGLY'S.




Along Hard Look

As a future social worker, 23-year-old Monika Vesela is dedicated to making the world a better place. Lucky for us, she's taking time to rock *our* world first.

Photographs by Brigham Field







"I live in a small town in the
Czech Republic and I love it.
Even if I leap into things
headfirst, as I tend to do, I know
people have got my back."



"I hate to get up early, and I have to admit that I'm kind of lazy, but I still like to go wild. I think I'm an angel in my mind but a devil in my body."





Monika

**"Sex on the beach is the best!
It's really romantic to be out under
the stars, and it's even better
during the day, when you might
get caught."**








"I once made love at a football stadium. I'm not shy, and sex in public is just fun. It was so exciting to hear the screaming fans watching the game."









"I love it when a man kisses his way down my body to my bottom, but it's also good when what he likes is new to me. My best sexual encounter is always the last one."

WE'RE LOOKING FOR THE HOTTEST GIRLS IN AMERICA. GO TO PENTHOUSEMODELS.COM. TO SEE MORE OF MONIKA, VISIT PENTHOUSE.COM/MONIKAVESELA.

The Great Depression

Millions of American men are popping psychotropic pills for depression, anxiety, and general lethargy. But are we really all that depressed?

Jon Sabin peers into the national medicine cabinet and wonders: Is it clinical or is it just life?

For the last several weeks, a drug prescription has been sitting in my desk drawer, calling to me like a spurned lover. It sings a psychotropic siren song, yearning to be filled. It's for Depakote, an antiseizure medication used to treat bipolar disorder. This is not the drug I was hoping for when I shelled out \$395 for a psychiatrist. I figured my mood swings and dwindling attention span indicated some low-grade depression that could be swiftly alleviated with a brand-name medication like Prozac or Paxil. Instead, I was prescribed the kind of potent concoction reserved for epileptics and Gary Busey.

I have no objections to taking drugs. I have consumed pills, powders, gels, liquids, solids, vapors, weeds, toad skins, and anything else that gets me completely fucked up. But as I hurdle toward 30 and the specter of adulthood, I want a new drug that gets me *un-fucked* up. I want something to settle my irritability and increasing anal-retentiveness. I want to hop on the happy-pill bandwagon along with the 118 million other medicated Americans. And yet I can't bring myself to fill the prescription. I'd have a hooker in Amsterdam inject Moroccan hashish into my anal cavity, yet I'm unable to pop a pill that has the potential to make me happy.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, antidepressants are the most widely prescribed drug in the U.S. With ten percent of people 18 to 25 suffering from some form of depression, antidepressant use nearly tripled between 1988 and 2000. "More men are entering some kind of mental-health treatment for depression than ever before," says Michael Addis, a psychology professor at Clark University. We've become a nation of neurotic Neos, popping red pills, blue pills, and everything in between. Welcome to Generation Rx.

But are we all really that depressed, or have we just forgotten how to suck it up and take it on the chin? Certainly there are some seriously depressed dudes out there who need a jolt of Zoloft just to get out of bed in the morning, but ten percent of the population? Guantánamo probably doesn't have a depression rate that high. Is it possible that we're not depressed but just a little bored, frustrated, and dissatisfied with our lives? Is it possible that we're not depressed but we're, well, normal? "We are overdiagnosing depression," says Jerome Wakefield, a New York University professor of social work and coauthor of *Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Sorrow into Depressive Disorder*. "If you go into your doctor's office and tell him that you're feeling a little blue, you get a script for Paxil." In a 2005 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 54 percent of volunteers (trained actors) posing as patients were able to score some brain candy by mimicking symptoms of depression and requesting certain drugs by name. It's easier to get a script for Wellbutrin than a ticket to the Winston Cup.

Part of the problem is how depression is defined. Psychologists typically form a diagnosis by asking patients

if they have experienced certain symptoms for at least two consecutive weeks. If you report experiencing three to five of these indications—feeling down, expressing little interest or pleasure in doing things, sleeping too much, sleeping too little, low self-esteem, weight gain, weight loss, fatigue, and trouble concentrating—odds are you'll be the proud owner of your very own SSRI, or selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor.

But the criteria for depression are so vague, they basically apply to everyone who isn't hooked up to a perpetual morphine drip. I always feel down during the dick-shriveling month of February, when the football season has ended and spring training is still four weeks away. "There is no distinction between normal intense sadness and depression," says Wakefield. "If your lover says she is in love with someone else and you lie around for a couple of weeks not feeling so good, that would enable you to be classified as having depressive disorder." This is exactly what the pharmaceutical industry wants: the complete medicalization of the human condition. By pathologizing every unpleasant feeling, Big Pharma can move more product. Feeling sad? Angry? Tired? No worries: A pharmacological fix is just a \$20 co-pay away.

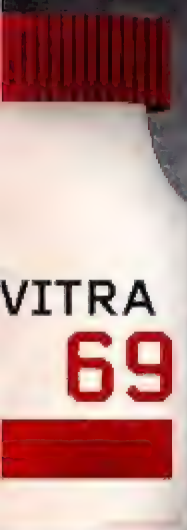
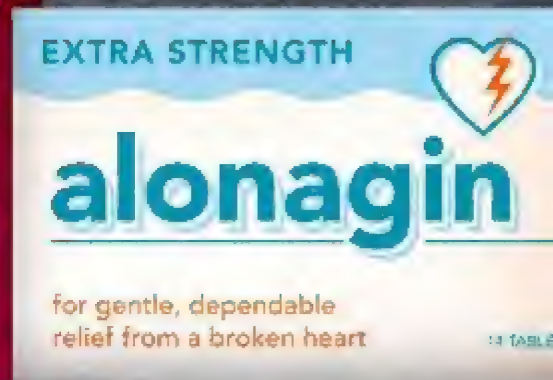
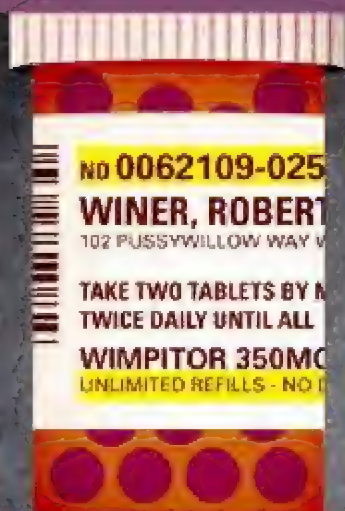
Pushing pills on people who don't really need them wouldn't be so bad if the stuff actually worked. But mounting evidence suggests that in some cases antidepressants are no more effective at treating mental dysfunction than sugar pills are. In the majority of clinical trials for the six most popular antidepressants, the pricey meds failed to work better than placebos. Now scientists are even studying the potential of ketamine as a fast-acting agent to cure the blues. That's right: "Special K," the horse tranquilizer that made you cry for days on end while curled in the fetal position, might be the next Prozac. I think I'll stick to snorting coke mixed with crushed ecstasy. It's probably cheaper.

Even though there's no guarantee that getting jacked on some neurotransmitter juice will make you perkier than Rachael Ray at a pizza-eating contest, what's the harm in trying? A lot, actually. They're called side effects. Depakote, for instance, can result in hair loss, weight gain, and liver damage. I don't know about you, but if I'm fat, bald, and jaundiced, I'm going to be pretty damn depressed. SSRIs like Paxil and Prozac, meanwhile, will crush your libido faster than the thought of Rosie O'Donnell in a G-string, and about a quarter of users experience sleep problems.

Aside from the physiological question—to pop or not to pop—there is also a larger issue: Does taking a pill to deal with life's hardships compromise our character? How can we develop coping skills if we rely on a chemical quick fix every time our fuck-buddy decides to go home with another guy? No one's saying that the guy who ponders suicide over his morning coffee should throw away his meds, but maybe the rest of us "borderline" cases, as my shrink calls me, should try manning up a bit before we look for pharmaceutical salvation.

As for my Depakote prescription, it continues to gather dust. I'm still a moody bitch and often feel more anxious than Woody Allen at a restricted country club, but I'm trying to maintain my sanity through nonmedical means. Besides, my psychiatrist tells me that if I take Depakote, I shouldn't drink alcohol anymore. And there are just some things in life more important than emotional stability. ☐

I'd have a hooker in Amsterdam inject Moroccan hashish into my anal cavity, yet I'm unable to pop a pill that has the potential to make me happy.



Harlem Knight

For his latest project, a documentary on legendary gangster Leroy "Nicky" Barnes, hip-hop capitalist Damon Dash heads uptown to the hood he once called home, where he meets up with old friends, serves some home brew, and holds court on the science of snitching.

By Alex French Photographs by Jessica Dimmock

TEL. (212) 369-988





Dash Bowe-Damon hangs in Harlem, combats the view from the Escalade, and greets a fan in his old hood.

By late afternoon, it's become one of those suffocating New York City summer days. To breathe is to have a burst of steamed air choke your lungs. In Spanish Harlem, the traffic is heavy. Even the sidewalks are mobbed—grizzled hood veterans recline on lawn chairs, watching a gaggle of teenage boys slap-boxing. Suddenly, from the middle row of his black Escalade, the man who should probably have the words *hip-hop impresario* legally added to his name pierces the haze. "You know what would be dope?" Damon Dash bellows. "If I could come back and buy 1199"—referring to the building he grew up in—"that would be hot."

Dash's cousin and driver, a burly, boiler-wide man named Hamu, brings the Caddy to a stop at a traffic light. A few hundred yards away, just past 108th on First Avenue, stands the high-rise of Dash's childhood—the one he's now rich enough to buy.

Today Dash, former CEO of Roc-A-Fella Records—the label that introduced the world to artists like Jay-Z and Kanye West—owns, in no particular order: five clothing companies, a Swiss watch concern, a vodka brand, TV- and movie-production businesses, Pro-Keds sneakers (which he bought a stake in last year), and, of course, the record label Damon Dash Music Group.

The local kid has made more than good. And to hear Dash tell it, Harlem remains a muse for his ever-expanding empire (though he now lives in a Tribeca loft). Over the years he has hit it big by packaging, cross-marketing, and selling the style, sound, and swagger of this neighborhood as an upscale urban product. And no product is out of the question: Don't be surprised if Hamu's highly spiked fruit punch, which Dash later passes out to any takers, comes to market.

Now, watching the broiling streets pass outside the smoke-gray tinted window, Dash goes nostalgic for his teenage years. "I might have had more fun then," he says. "I had my homeboys. The street was our playground. We raced dirt bikes down the street, the cops chased us every day, we hopped out of cabs, we would eat and run out of restaurants. We had a ball."

This tour of Dash's early years underscores the role Harlem played in forming the highly driven man he is today, and helps

explain his decision to coproduce *Mr. Untouchable*, a documentary about Leroy "Nicky" Barnes, the infamous 1970s Harlem kingpin who escaped a life sentence by snitching on his closest friends, partners, and even his family.

"Oh, shit! Is that Ruben?" Dash's head is out the window as we pull up to 1199. "I ain't seen him in, like, ten, 20 years! Yo, man!" Dash flings open his door before Hamu can stop the truck. He's on the sidewalk *like that*, shouting up to a lanky guy on the first-floor balcony.

"Gotta show niggas that snitching ain't right," Dash shouts, by way of explaining his participation in the Barnes documentary.

This theme resonates with certain black communities. In 2004, a *Stop Snitching* DVD produced by an alleged Baltimore drug dealer blew up into a national phenomenon among the criminally minded and would-be gangsters. A line of T-shirts and other apparel (T.I. wore a "Stop Snitching" hoodie in our August issue) and a popular mix tape offer the same advice. Baltimore police countered with their own message: "Keep talking."

We adjourn for sandwiches at a deli across the street. "He just caught a case," says Dash about Ruben (not his real name). "Some snitch told on him. Cops busted into his house and found guns."

Back out on the corner of 110th Street, Dash holds court. Between mouthfuls of pastrami, he thug-hugs teens in do-rags and shin-length basketball shorts. Chilling on the sidewalk with a four-karat yellow-diamond stud plugged into his left ear, Dash is the living embodiment of the hustler's dream—the realization of what a streetwise kid from Harlem can accomplish with the right opportunities and ample ambition.

"My building wasn't the most hood in the hood," he admits. "It was a little like the suburbs. I'd almost say I had a privileged life."

Dash didn't grow up rich, but he was no stranger to conspicuous consumption, either. His mother, a secretary, finagled him a spot at a prestigious public elementary school. From there he won a scholarship to the exclusive Dwight School. Then his life suddenly collapsed: His mother died of an asthma attack when Dash was 15, and he was expelled from Dwight (which some jokingly say is an acronym for "Dumb White Idiots Getting High Together") for poor attendance. He landed at Kent, a boarding



"My family was like, 'Barnes is a rat. We don't want to speak about him.' I had to bring them to the screening to show them I wouldn't put money into a rat's pocket. I'd never glorify that."

school in the Connecticut woods, for a year before returning to New York, where he eventually passed his GED.

"People downtown would say, 'You're not from the hood. You played lacrosse in Connecticut. You went to private school,'" Dash recalls. "Do you know how much harder it is to go to private school and come back on the block in penny loafers and a pink shirt? That meant every time someone wanted to catch wreck, they was coming to me because they thought I was the weakest. Which is why it was so important that I was nice with my hands."

An old-school hustler named Lurch approaches. "When I was a kid, we was all afraid of Lurch," Dash says. Not anymore. Now Lurch is pitching Dash a script based on his life. When Dash mentions that he's involved with *Mr. Untouchable*, Lurch rolls his eyes and shoots him a look that could mean, "Man, you just fuckin' with me, right? Right?"

Dash is used to this reaction and shrugs it off. "Tell you the truth," Dash confides, "all of these cats got stories. Anybody from these streets who hustled and survived has a story. It just depends on which movie you decide to make."

The movie Damon Dash did decide to make, *Mr. Untouchable*, is an unsettling examination of the rise and decline of Harlem's most infamous gangster. (Dash came late to the project, with an eye toward a future feature-film project.) Thirty-five years ago, Dash's old neighborhood belonged to Leroy "Nicky" Barnes. He was, effectively, CEO of "the Council," a seven-member organization that held the controlling stake in New York City's then-raging heroin scene. Despite the fact that Barnes was poisoning this neighborhood, he became a mythical figure:

Harlem's version of the American dream, the junior high dropout and former junkie who'd found a fast way to escape poverty and desperation. In 1977, the year Reggie Jackson hit three home runs in a single World Series game, Barnes was more popular in Harlem than the Yankees slugger. Dash was just a toddler when Barnes was at his most powerful, but he grew up in the thick of the legend, as his father ran a methadone clinic on East 116th Street.

In '77, Barnes posed on the cover of the *New York Times Magazine* next to the headline "Mr. Untouchable," wearing a bespoke suit and a smug expression that so offended Jimmy Carter, the president ordered the attorney general to take down Barnes. Undercover agents infiltrated the Council. That winter Barnes was brought to trial, convicted, and sentenced to life without parole.

Barnes continued running his operation from jail. Five years into his sentence, he learned that his colleagues were double-crossing him—stealing his money, stepping out with his women, and even getting high in front of his two young daughters. To strike back, Barnes got cozy with the U.S. attorney. When he finally took the witness stand, Barnes sang for his life. His taste for revenge was so great, he implicated himself in eight murders to help nail Council members. His testimony helped indict 44 people and convict 16—including his ex-wife, who received a ten-year term. Four members of the Council will die in prison.

I ask Dash if he had any contact with Barnes during the production of *Mr. Untouchable* and he explodes: "Hell no! I can't talk to Nicky Barnes, right, Hamu? Man, fuck Nicky Barnes! I got a lot of scrutiny for even affiliating myself with this project. Everyone in my family was like, 'He's a rat. Don't bring him to life.' I had to bring my family to the screening to show them: 'You know I wouldn't put money into a rat's pocket. You know I'd never glorify that.'"

At times, when he talks about Barnes, Dash could just as easily be speaking about his former partner, Jay-Z. "You have to understand the relationship," he says. "You're kinda close with the people you do business with. You're friends with them. You party with them. How you gonna turn on people that you hung out with like that?"

In the early nineties, Dash started hanging out with a former drug dealer and aspiring rapper from Brooklyn named Shawn Carter. Dash recognized Carter's real skills and put up the money for a demo tape. When no record execs bit, Dash produced CDs himself and sold them out of his car. Roc-A-Fella was officially open for business.

In 1996 Carter, by then known as Jay-Z, released his star-making debut, *Reasonable Doubt*. When the big record companies turned contrite and offered distribution deals, Dash wanted more. In 1997, he sold 50 percent of Roc-A-Fella to Def Jam and went about building the Roc into a \$500 million urban-lifestyle brand. But in the music business, every crescendo must conclude: Eventually, a rift developed between Dash and Jay-Z. In 2004, Def Jam bought out the remaining stake in Roc-A-Fella, and Jay-Z moved to the boardroom as Def Jam CEO while snatching the biggest acts from the Roc-A-Fella roster.

Damon Dash is on his own now. He's got no boss, no partners, no board of directors to tell him what to do. He says he's switched his focus from music to fashion. He wants to produce more movies. He's working on a TV show with the writers of *Weeds*. He's integrated from top to bottom.

"When I was a kid, I was sitting on the block trying to think of ways to do the things I wanted to do," Dash tells me as we sit in Spanish Harlem traffic. He pauses and stares out the window. At 36, Dash has already done what Barnes never could—he's got cash and respect, sure, but also legitimacy. He turns back from the window: "I do consider myself to be the hustler's dream." **OT—E**

Alex French's work has appeared in *GQ*, *New York* magazine, and *West: The Los Angeles Times* magazine, among other publications. He lives with his wife in Brooklyn.

Sean Avery

The most hated man in hockey talks about getting dissed by Rangers brass, how to win a hockey fight, and his own Hollywood hottie.

Last March, *The Hockey News* asked 283 NHL players to name the most despised guy in the league. A whopping 168 of them came back with the same answer: New York Rangers forward Sean Avery. Ask him if he cares: The 27-year-old is coming off the best year of his career, his teammates and coach credited him with sparking New York's stretch run to the playoffs last year, and he's dating *Girl Next Door* hottie Elisha Cuthbert.

Considering all you did for the Rangers last season, how can you not be pissed at them for their extremely negative comments during your arbitration hearing?

You just gotta deal with it. I know that's just the way the business works. When I sit in the dressing room with my teammates, I know that all those guys have had to go through it. And the coaching staff or the girl in the front office—they have nothing to do with it, so it's not really an issue. You get upset for a couple of days, but then, if anything, it just fuels your fire to prove them wrong.

You gave the Rangers a huge boost last season, but is it also fair to say that coming to New York helped you take your game to another level?

Yeah, just being in the city and walking into Madison Square Garden every night for a game is a pretty exciting thing, you know? It gets your blood flowing a little more.

Can you compare New York and L.A. as hockey towns?

You can't. L.A.'s not a sports town, by any means. But it's tough to compare New York to anywhere. There are only a handful of cities in the league that could compare. Maybe Detroit and Toronto. As an athlete playing in New York, there's so much responsibility, but it comes with a lot of perks.

Such as?

Well, you can put an asterisk beside perks [laughs]. It's a great town, you know? It's amazing. You've got everything—the best restaurants, the

best-looking women, the best bars. It's everything thrown into one place.

On the ice, you've had your share of fights—many of them against bigger guys. How do you hold your own?

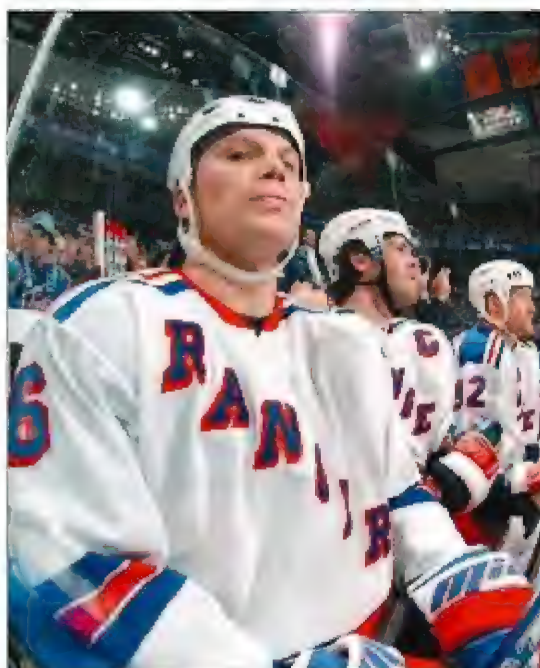
Try not to get hit. That's the biggest thing, and then it's just hold on and throw more than he throws, I guess.

Ever taken a boxing lesson?

No. I probably should have, because it would have helped as far as how hard I punch. But I'm trying to transition myself—I'm trying to *soften* my hands, not make them harder. You don't get paid for hard hands.

You started out as an agitator, leading the NHL in penalty minutes, but your hockey skills have really grown. Have the refs caught up to your development?

I think so. I think everyone's kind of opening their eyes. I certainly still give the refs some things to be upset about. I don't think that's ever gonna go away. All I really want is to get a fair shake—for them not to assume—



After Avery's arrival last winter, the Rangers went 17-6-6 and stormed into the playoffs.

that's probably the biggest thing. And that takes time, but it's coming around.

Last year you were voted the most hated player in the NHL. I get the idea that was a badge of honor for you.

[Laughs] Yeah. It's not that I don't enjoy hockey players, because there's a lot of guys I do—but I make it a point not to like guys on the other team. And usually when someone doesn't like you, you don't like them back. Plus, I verbally announce who I don't like on a daily basis. So I guess that kind of catches up with you.

So who are some of the guys that get under your skin?

Oh, man. There's so many. There's Darcy Tucker in Toronto, or Blake—the guy in Toronto who used to play on the Islanders.

Jason Blake.

Yeah. There's just a lot of guys I'm sure I wouldn't want to spend any time with away from the rink. They're probably bigger dorks off the ice than they are on the ice.

What if you get traded to one of their teams?

Well that's the beauty of our sport. Not a lot of guys hold grudges. What happens on the ice stays on the ice.

If you were NHL commissioner, name three things you'd do to draw fans.

I'd get a deal with HBO and do a show like *Inside the NFL*. I would stick to the business side and not act like I know the game. And ... what else? I'd trade Sidney Crosby to New York somehow. Oh, and get us off OLN or Versus or whatever it's called now—the invisible channel that no one can find.

You're dating Elisha Cuthbert, and other NHL'ers have dated Carol Alt and Anna Kournikova. What is it with women and hockey players?

We get the job done. I don't know [laughs]. It's interesting. I'm still trying to figure it out. But it's not all of them, though. A lot of guys I've played with—thank God they found their wives at an early age, because they'd be lost in the real world right now.

Any chance you'll take a knee soon? I don't think I'm ever gonna do that.

Why?

The whole idea of marriage—I just don't think it works. It just changes everything and it becomes too difficult. I like everything to be easy and smooth. I don't need a ring to signify that I'm going to be with someone for the rest of my life.



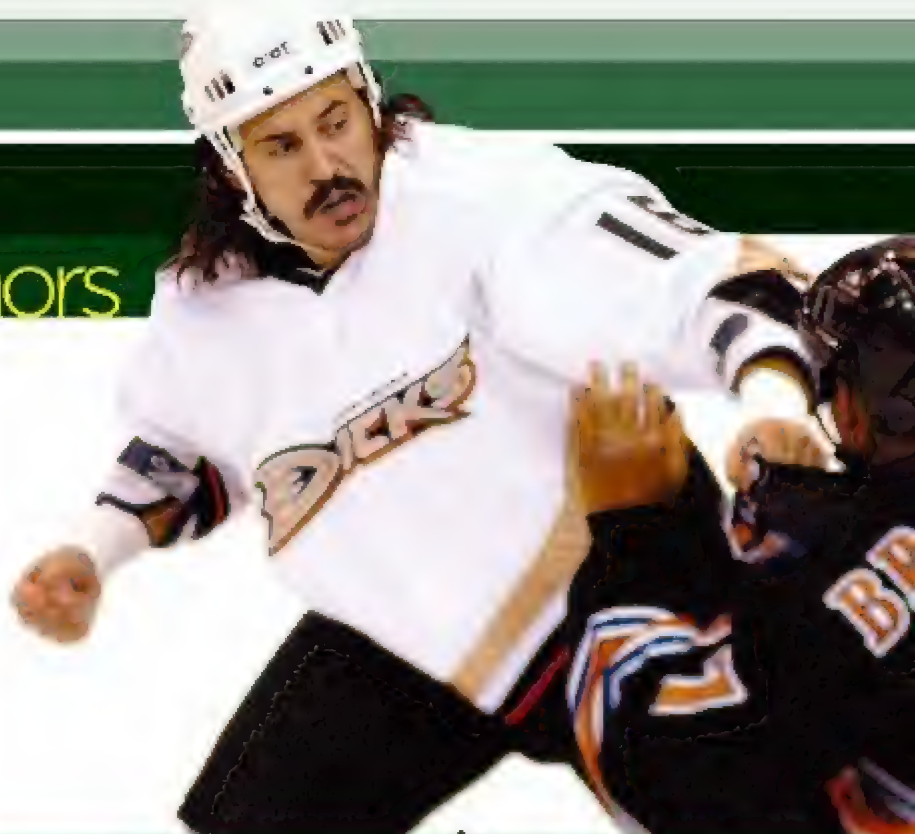
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Gametime

NHL Preview: Off-Season Honors

Which NHL teams made the best moves this summer and which ones blew it? We hand out the hardware.

The NHL has the best postseason-trophy names in all of sports, hands down. There's the Lady Byng, the Conn Smythe, and not one but two awards named for men called Lester: the Lester Patrick and the Lester B. Pearson. In the spirit of these honors, we've created some new preseason awards for the league, spotlighting the teams whose off-season moves gave them the best chance of success in 2007-08 and those whose moves ... didn't.



THE CHARLES B. WANG AWARD

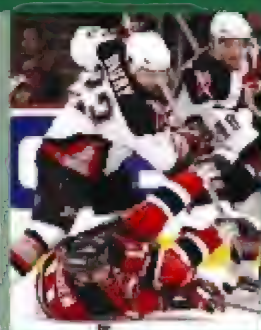
FOR: The nuttiest exec of the off-season

WINNER: Kevin Lowe, Islanders

Named for the New York Islanders' famously wacky owner, the Wang Award goes to Lowe, Edmonton's general manager. Lowe got crazy with the offer sheets, tendering one to Buffalo's star winger, Thomas Vanek, for seven years and \$50 million, and another to Anaheim's non-star winger Dustin Penner for five years and \$21.25 million. The Sabres angrily matched Edmonton's play for Vanek but the Ducks didn't, and now Lowe is stuck with the tab, a potential bust in Penner, and the loss of his first-, second-, and third-round picks in next year's draft. Who says hockey is boring?

RUNNERS-UP:

Any time you lose your new star (Ryan Smyth, who was an Islander for all of four months) and your leading scorer (Jason Blake), you've bungled your off-season.



THE RUMSFELD MEMORIAL URN

FOR: The team that let it all get away

WINNER: Buffalo Sabres

After producing the best regular-season record in the league last year and reaching the Eastern Conference finals, the Sabres lost their cocaptains, Daniel Briere and Chris Drury, to free agency. They still have top scorer Thomas Vanek, but their fiercely loyal, long-suffering fans have to be crushed.

RUNNERS-UP:

The Preds finished with 110 points last year, with Paul Kariya, Tomas Vokoun, Kimmo Timonen, Scott Hartnell, and a year-end jolt from Peter Forsberg. Every one of those players has since left, and the Preds' future in Nashville was in doubt until August, when owner Craig Leipold agreed to sell to a local consortium.



THE LORD NELSON TROPHY

FOR: The exec who fought hardest to right the ship of a once-proud franchise

WINNER: Paul Holmgren, Philadelphia Flyers

Named for the legendary British admiral, this trophy goes to Philadelphia GM Paul Holmgren, who took an aging, moribund team (league-low 22 wins last year) and revamped it with several deft moves, including acquiring ace free agent Briere from Buffalo and defenseman Kimmo Timonen and winger Scott Hartnell in a draft-day trade with Nashville. The Flyers could go from worst to first.

RUNNERS-UP:

On the first day of free agency, he landed two of the biggest prizes on the market—centers Chris Drury and Scott Gomez—and later re-signed goalie Henrik Lundqvist and forwards Brendan Shanahan, Petr Prucha, and Sean Avery.

THE DAVE SCHULTZ SHIELD

FOR: The team that best deploys physical intimidation in the league's new pro-finessing era

WINNER: Anaheim Ducks

Named after famed enforcer Dave "the Hammer" Schultz, this one goes to your Stanley Cup-champion Anaheim Ducks. They won it all last season with a smothering style that produced more fights and penalty minutes than any other team in the league, and then they went out and added Todd Bertuzzi, whose vicious 2004 assault on Colorado's Steve Moore resulted in criminal charges. The Ducks also gave modern-day Hanson brother George Parros (top) and does his shirt say "Dicks"?—who played 32 games, scored one goal, and racked up 102 penalty minutes last season—a two-year contract extension. They're poised to repeat, but no one will ever call them pretty.

RUNNERS-UP:

The Devils added bruisers Arron Asham and Jean-Luc Grand Pierre to a lineup already featuring tough guys Cam Janssen and Grant Marshall. This means two things: (1) you'll see a lot of Devils action on HockeyFights.com this season, and (2) they were paying attention during the Ducks' run last year.



THE MARIO LEMIEUX TROPHY

FOR: The venerable franchise(s) most likely to make a return to glory this season

WINNERS: Colorado Avalanche and Detroit Red Wings

The Avalanche, who narrowly missed the playoffs last year, have since added All-Star winger Ryan Smyth (previously of the New York Islanders by way of Edmonton) and gritty defenseman Scott Hannan. Look for them to contend this year. They share this hardware with their archrivals, the Detroit Red Wings. The Wings were the No. 1 seed in the West last year and the only team to win two games in a playoff series against eventual champion Anaheim. They welcomed back goalie Dominik Hasek and added former Devils stalwart Brian Rafalski to anchor their defense.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP): AP; GETTY IMAGES; AP; JEFF ZELEVANSKY/ICON SM; GETTY IMAGES. OPPOSITE PAGE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY (FROM LEFT) GETTY IMAGES; BETTMAN/CORBIS

Penthouse Top 5
World Series Moments

Picking the "classic" is the real classic. These are the moments that keep baseball fans coming back through all the labor strife, drug scandals, and other distractions.

5

KIRK GIBSON MAKES LIKE ROY HOBBS
GAME 1, 1988

DODGERS VS. ATHLETICS

Gibson spent the first eight innings of this game receiving treatment for hamstring and knee injuries he'd suffered in the NLCS. In the ninth, he limped out to face All-Star closer Dennis Eckersley. There were two out, a man on, and the Dodgers trailed 4-3. Gibson fouled off three straight pitches, ran the count to an edge-of-your-seat 3-2, and then drove a slider over the right-field fence. Walk-off—or in this case, hobble-off—home run. The Dodgers went on to beat the heavily favored A's in five games.

4

FISK PLEADS HIS CASE
GAME 6, 1975

REDS VS. RED SOX

With five one-run games, two extra-inning affairs, and two more decided in the ninth, this might have been the greatest Series ever. It peaked in Game 6 when Boston catcher Carlton Fisk hooked a fly ball to left in the bottom of the 12th and—in a sequence replayed endlessly since—hopped toward first, waving his arms to get the ball to stay fair. It did, giving the Sox a 7-6 win so compelling, it almost overshadowed the Red Sox Series victory the next night.

3

PERFECTION ON THE BIGGEST STAGE
GAME 5, 1956

YANKEES VS. DODGERS

The National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs was founded at the Grand Central Hotel in New York City in 1876—the Plymouth Rock moment of Major League Baseball. Since then, there have been 17 perfect games pitched in the majors. A perfect game is a rare feat, but Yankee Don Larsen's perfect game in the World Series is, to this day, a singular one.

2

JUMPING JOE CARTER
GAME 6, 1993

BLUE JAYS VS. PHILLIES

If you're looking for a reason to explain why you love sports, you could do worse than the image of Toronto outfielder Joe Carter literally jumping for joy as he circled the bases following his World Series-winning home run in the bottom of the ninth against Philadelphia. "They haven't made that word up yet to describe what the feeling is," Carter said at the time.

1

"CALLED SHOT"
GAME 3, 1932

YANKEES VS. CUBS

This is the greatest in-your-face moment in Series history, whether or not Babe Ruth actually predicted his homer against Chicago righty Charlie Root. There was genuine bad blood between the Yanks and the Cubs, and when Ruth came to bat in Game 3 with the score tied 4-4, Chicago players and fans alike ripped into him mercilessly. He took two called strikes, turning to the Cub dugout and counting off each one. With Wrigley Field at a full boil over this hotdogging, Ruth then pointed at Root, or at the center-field bleachers. Or maybe he didn't. But he *did* crush Root's next pitch to deep center. Lou Gehrig hit the pitch after that for a homer as well, and the Yanks won 7-5. They swept the Series the next day.

The Ducks won it all last year with a smothering style that produced more fights and penalty minutes than any other team in the league.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

The Pittsburgh Penguins were one of the most exciting teams in the league last year, with wunderkinder Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin, and Jordan Staal providing the highlights. But as their first-round exit to Ottawa proved, they were raw. They've added veterans Darryl Sydor and Petr Sykora to address that problem. The Washington Capitals picked up 25-goal man Viktor Kozlov, center Michael Nylander, and veteran defenseman Tom Potl. Maybe superstar Alex Ovechkin finally has a proper supporting cast.

THE CANADA BOWL

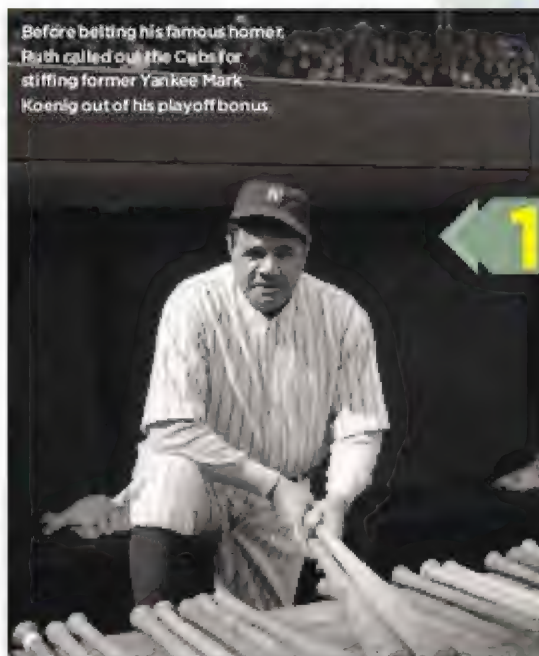
FOR: The team that, for a variety of possible reasons, remained moderate—like the national character of Canada.

Having reached the Stanley Cup finals last year, the Sens didn't need to do a whole lot, and that was good, because they were handcuffed by cap restrictions. They re-signed goalie Ray Emery and center Chris Kelly, and they retain their potent core of Dany Heatley, Daniel Alfredsson, and Jason Spezza.

RUNNERS-UP:

San Jose Sharks (2006 MVP Joe Thornton and ... that was about it. The Canadiens did little more than sign three-time All-Star defenseman Roman Hamrlik after ditching winger Sergei Samsonov. The Habs are in danger of missing the playoffs two years in a row—a rarity for the franchise that has won 23.1 percent of all NHL championships.

Before betting his famous homer, Ruth called out the Cubs for stiffing former Yankee Mark Koenig out of his playoff bonus.



National Felon's League

Michael Vick, Tank Johnson, and "Pacman" Jones aren't the only athletes to have had brushes with the law. Arrests of NFL players have doubled in the past three years compared to the previous three. We review the league's record for 2007.
By Chuck Tannert




The Michael Vick dogfighting case is merely the highest-profile instance of an NFL player's brush with the law; it's by no means the only or even the worst one. Limiting ourselves to 2007 cases only, we identified 44 incidents of alleged player misconduct as of press time, and looking back two years, we found 112 cases. Since 2000, there are records of 329 NFL player arrests. When the players' most powerful ally, union executive director Gene Upshaw, acknowledges that the situation is out of hand—he said at last year's Super Bowl that the league has a segment of "young players who have no regard for the law, much less civility"—well, you know the situation is out of hand.

Here is a team-by-team account of the most serious transgressions this year.



"We have not seen a fall from grace like this in contemporary American sports," NFL agent Leigh Steinberg said of Vick (top and above).

Team, Date	Player, Position	Offense	Disposition	Commentary
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS				
5/5/2007	Ahmad Carroll, cornerback	Charged with possession of drugs and a firearm during the commission of a felony	Waived by the Jaguars two days later	(Carrying an unlicensed gun) + (several dozen tabs of Ec) = the opposite of a rave
3/19/2007	Gerald Sensabaugh, safety	Arrested for speeding and carrying a loaded weapon without a permit	He claims charges were dropped	When you're packing a loaded gun without a permit, you might want to drive the speed limit. Just a thought.
3/10/2007	Charles Sharon, wide receiver	Arrested in Tampa and charged with felony grand theft of a firearm	Charges reportedly dropped	"This has been a real humbling experience for me," Sharon said. "Maybe this was the Lord telling me to get back into his word."
MIAMI DOLPHINS				
7/14/2007	Chris Chambers, wide receiver	Charged with DWI, reckless driving, and speeding in Charlotte, North Carolina	At press time, scheduled to appear in court on September 26	Perhaps Miami's dismal off-season drove Chambers to drink ... and drive.
7/3/2007	Kelly Campbell, wide receiver	Arrested in Atlanta; charged with possession of marijuana and ecstasy	Pending; but he was waived	Thus ended Campbell's quest for a roster spot as Miami's fifth receiver.
6/24/2007	Fred Evans, defensive tackle	Charged with battery on a police officer, disorderly conduct, and resisting arrest	Pleaded no contest	Putting your career in jeopardy because of a confrontation with a cable is stupid. Refusing to get out of the cab when police arrive will get you Tasered.
3/16/2007	Joey Porter, linebacker	Charged with battery for punching Cincinnati Bengal Levi Jones in Las Vegas	Pleaded no contest and was fined \$1,000	Known for trash-talking each other on the field, these former AFC North rivals took it to the next level off the field.
MINNESOTA VIKINGS				
4/15/2007	Cedric Griffin, cornerback	Charged with misdemeanor disorderly conduct after a dress-code "disagreement"	The charge will be dropped in a year, as long as he commits no similar violations	He was tossed out of the bar for not pulling up his sagging pants far enough.
1/1/2007	Travis Taylor, wide receiver	Charged with fifth-degree assault, disorderly conduct, and interfering with traffic	Pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct; \$1,000 fine and 48 hours of community service	When ordered to get back in his limo so that an ambulance could pass, Taylor, who is now with the Raiders, began pushing a cop, who responded with his Taser.
NEW YORK JETS				
5/20/2007	Justin Miller, kick returner	Arrested and charged with misdemeanor assault	Pending	Swing and a miss—the 23-year-old Pro Bowl kick returner swung at a man during an argument at a New York City nightclub but hit a woman when the man ducked. Doh!
OAKLAND RAIDERS				
7/5/2007	Bryant McNeal, defensive end	Outstanding warrant in Florida for defrauding a pawnbroker	The Raiders waived McNeal on July 11.	If you sell a Land Rover to a pawnbroker for \$15,000 but don't own the vehicle in the first place, you, too, will be charged with defrauding a pawnbroker.
PITTSBURGH STEELERS				
5/10/2007	Richard Seigler, linebacker	Charged with having a role in running a prostitution ring in Las Vegas	Cut by team the same day	Football player by day, pimp by night
ST. LOUIS RAMS				
3/4/2007	Dominique Byrd, tight end	Arrested in Los Angeles on suspicion of drunken driving	Pleaded not guilty; the case was scheduled to go to trial in October	Three words for NFL revelers: Call a cab. (This incident follows Byrd's arrest for assault and armed criminal action for his alleged role in a scuffle at a nightclub last December.)
SAN DIEGO				
1/6/2007	Ryan Krause, tight end	Arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence	Pleaded guilty to DUI; \$1,756 fine, 32 hours of volunteer work	Can anyone handle their liquor in the NFL? Krause also got five years of "informal probation" (what's that, business casual?) and entered a first-time-offenders program. Now plays for Cleveland.
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS				
3/13/2007	Jerramy Stevens, tight end	Arrested on suspicion of DUI and possession of marijuana in downtown Scottsdale, Arizona	Seahawks released him; now with Tampa Bay	In high school, he pleaded guilty to fourth-degree assault; at the University of Washington, he rammed his truck into a retirement home, pleading guilty to a misdemeanor hit-and-run charge. The Seahawks still picked him in the first round.
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS				
3/29/2007	Lionel Gates, running back	Arrested and charged with hitting a pregnant woman in the face	Felony battery charge dropped	Gates reportedly kicked in the front door of an ex-girlfriend's apartment, destroyed two TVs, and assaulted her. Is court-ordered anger-management class enough?
TENNESSEE TITANS				
6/30/2007	Adam "Pacman" Jones, cornerback	Charged with felony coercion stemming from a February melee and shooting during NBA All-Star weekend	Pending; preliminary hearing scheduled for October 29	Strippers, booze, cash, and guns—a lethal cocktail. You know the story: a melee at a gentleman's club, shots fired, three people injured—two of them permanently.... And dogfighting got all the attention this past summer?

A full-page photograph of Adam 'Pacman' Jones walking outdoors. He is wearing a dark blue baseball cap with a white 'B' logo, a dark blue and white vertically striped long-sleeved shirt, and dark pants. He is looking off to the side. To his left, a man in a white dress shirt, dark tie, and dark pants is walking, holding a black object in his hands. They are walking on a sidewalk in front of a building with large windows.

Strippers, booze, cash, and guns proved to be a lethal cocktail for Tennessee Titans cornerback Adam "Pacman" Jones.

Jones left court in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in July 2007, after proceedings in one of the 11 separate police investigations he's been involved in since he was drafted in 2005.

Rock 'n' Roll Resurrection

Kid Rock sold 12 million records as the Devil Without a Cause. Now he's back—this time as Rock and Roll Jesus—spreading the gospel about visiting Iraq, chilling with Bush, and explaining how he came to make a sex tape costarring Scott Stapp.

By Rebecca Swanner

W eaving along the Pacific Coast Highway, I'm trying to keep the taillights of the

black Lincoln Continental in sight, because our destination is not easy to find. Eventually, the convertible pulls into the driveway of a Malibu mansion, the door swings open, and out steps Bob Ritchie—better known as Kid Rock.

Last year may have taken a toll on Mr. Rock—what with a highly publicized marriage to and subsequent divorce from Pam Anderson—but 2007 has brought the Kid some better luck. For one thing, he's putting the finishing touches on his first studio album in four years. *Rock and Roll Jesus* is a collection of hard-driving anthems inspired by everything from Motown to country, and it may be his best record to date.

Inside his home studio, a framed, uncashed check from Hank Williams hangs on one wall. A Bruce Springsteen guitar is cradled in a floor stand. Kid sits down at his computer, readies a cigar, and presses play. After the first few songs, I realize that this *Rock and Roll Jesus* might just make me a believer yet.

Okay, what's up with the title?

I always give myself a title because it's fun. I've been the Detroit Cowboy, the

American Bad Ass, the Early Mornin' Stoned Pimp, and the Devil Without a Cause. Ten years ago, I released *Devil Without a Cause*, which was huge for me. I think this record is better, and it feels like I've come full circle. *Rock and Roll Jesus* is the opposite end of the spectrum.

Is that all?

It's also to throw a nose in the air to everyone trying to be so fucking politically correct. All these fucking weirdos to the far right, and all these fucking weirdos to the far left! I think people just want to find common ground and walk the middle. And also, I believe in God. I believe in Jesus, and I think it's great to promote his name. I was talking to a friend of mine who's a reverend, and he was saying how at the Virginia Tech shooting he heard people wrote letters to God asking Him where He was while the bullets were flying. He said, "I think God said, 'They don't want me in public schools anymore.'"

The Christian right might not be psyched about the title.

I'm sure some crazy right-wing people will come out and say it's blasphemy that I'm using the Lord's name in vain to make money, but I'm already fucking rich. I think I've helped more people than I ever would have been able to without being as successful as I am through music. And I think this album is just going to help more.

"I'm sure some crazy right-wing people will come out and say it's blasphemy that I'm using the Lord's name in vain to make money, but I'm already fucking rich."



Interview

Do you think *Jesus* will sell as well as *Devil* did?

I don't know. Have you been reading that 50 Cent thing where he says he's going to sell more records than Kanye West, and if he doesn't he's not going to have a solo career? I bet in the long run, I sell more records than both of those two put together. Because of the options that are available for getting records out nowadays, I might not be able to move 12 million records. But I do think I have the last shot at having a diamond record.

Speaking of 50, you were recently quoted as saying, "Rap is easy." [Laughs] Isn't that great? All the fucking rappers and all the fucking people with their rap magazines need to calm the fuck down. God forbid someone says something bad about rap! I'm a rapper by nature. I started out as a deejay. To me, hip-hop is the blues music of our day and age. But writing a rap song is ten times easier than writing a melodic song that's hopefully going to be around 20 years from now.

Why?

I think it's much harder to come up with melody and chord progression. There's been some great rap. I don't hear a lot of it lately; then again, I haven't been listening to a lot of hip-hop. But Reverend Run from Run-DMC and I are working on a record called *Running With the Kid*. It's going to be fun, old-school hip-hop. Run-DMC was a huge influence on me, and we want to make a really fun, socially relevant record. Kind of like if Eric Clapton did something with B. B. King. Like the old-school Run-DMC track, "Sucker MCs," where it's just a beatbox and a hand clap. Then there might be some acoustic guitar and I might sing melodic hooks.

You've said you also might do something with Lil Jon on *Crunk Rock*. Do you think he'll give you a commemorative pimp cup? That'd be fun. I could ride around Malibu in my fucking Confederate flag General Lee golf cart with my pimp cup. That would make the neighbors look, wouldn't it?

"All Summer Long" is a mash-up of Warren Zevon's "Werewolves of London" and Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama." How did that happen?

A friend of mine brought a track over that had a beat with "Werewolves of London" over it, and I was like,

"Werewolves of London" has the same chord progression as "Sweet Home Alabama," which is the same chord progression as Steve Miller's "Take the Money and Run." As I listened to it, I started humming "Sweet Home Alabama" and thought, *Wow, that's a mash-up. Let's take it a step further. Let's put these songs together and write an original melody and lyrics.*

You certainly don't mince any words on the chorus of the album's first single, "So Hot," singing, "I wanna

fuck you like I'm never going to see you again."

The riff was so hard, so melodic, but so evil. I just wanted to say something to make people pay attention, let them know that this is 100 percent pure fucking rock 'n' roll. This is pole-dancing music. This is spitfire and throw-some-horns-up music.

The lyrics go on to say, "I know you're trouble, but I'm still obsessed." Do you like troublesome women? Love 'em. Love 'em!



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY SHUR/CORBIS OUTLINE



What attracts you to trouble?

Oh, fuck, I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong here, and I hate to stereotype, but it seems that a lot of times, the hottest girls are the most fucked up in the head.

You were married to Pam Anderson, who some people consider to be one of the hottest women ever. What's the real story behind your split?
I'm not one to kiss and tell. As much as I'd love to tell, it'd be very embarrassing for other parties involved. I think it's self-explanatory—

"I was at the White House drinking a Beam and Coke, shooting the shit with Rumsfeld, when Bush came by and gave me five like we were in Detroit."

who likes to be in the papers and who doesn't? Who wants to be in Detroit drinking a Budweiser, and who wants to make sure *Us Weekly* is everywhere they happen to be?

Or who wants to be in Iraq with the troops. What moved you to visit?

I was going through a hard time after the divorce, and I really wanted to do something positive that was unselfish. I was talking to Senator Bill Frist, and I asked him who was going to Iraq for Christmas. He said nobody, as far as he'd heard. Something went off in me, and I got that warm feeling and was like, *That's the right thing to do—jump on a plane with my guitar and spend Christmas in Iraq.*

Was it the right decision?

Absolutely. But it was very scary, too. The first time I went to Iraq it was like, *Hooray, we won the war!* I went over with 150 other celebrities and was like, *Wow, it's no big deal.* This time, it was very dark. The mood had changed.

How bad was it?

Riding around in Blackhawks three or four times a day, then hearing how one got shot down. Going to the hospital on Christmas Day after an IED [improvised explosive device] had just hit a convoy in the streets of Baghdad. Then I'm driving through the streets of Baghdad in a fucking Hummer to see these kids who just got ... One kid was dying. The chaplain was going up to see him, and seeing the other marines crying.

Do you think the troops are getting a raw deal?

It's hard to say, because no one knows what the future will hold. A lot of people are down on gun control, but if it weren't for guns and people who know how to use them in America, we'd all be sitting around with swastikas saying, "Heil Hitler!"

Anyway, what about the troops' lack of body armor and other essentials?

I think we could always take better care of the people who stand up and defend our rights, but I think the hardest thing to understand for a lot of people is that these kids are very young and a lot of them think people who oppose the war are against *them*. You have to be very careful with what you talk about—especially when you're some Hollywood fucker. Just because you made a great movie doesn't make you an expert on foreign policy.

When it comes to such things, do you think celebrities should keep their mouths shut?

As much as people are down on Donald Rumsfeld, I've seen his background. To see his years in public service, his years in office, and the education he has, he must know a bit more than someone who has the latest Hollywood blockbuster.


Haven't you hung out with Rummy?

I was at the White House drinking a Beam and Coke, shooting the shit with Rumsfeld, when Bush came by and gave me five like we were on Seven Mile and Van Dyke in Detroit. I don't care if people like Bush or not, I got some fucking dap from the president. I'm drinking a Beam and Coke in the White House! Fuck! And all I wanted to do was make some music, a little bit of money, and maybe get laid.

Since you brought it up—are we going to have to watch out for another sex tape?

No! I'm not into that. That wasn't me, that was fucking Scott Stapp or whoever was videotaping that. I remember saying at the time, "Dude, what's up with the camera?" As soon as the camera was on, I started teasing him. I haven't seen the tape, but it's got to be funny, because I remember we're sitting there getting blown and I'm saying things like, "Dude, aren't you in a religious band?"

How did Scott Stapp and you end up in a video together?

I'm a nice guy. It's kind of like I had one Twinkie left, and I let him have half. How nice is that? It's like watching someone get their first kiss. 

Rebecca Swanner is a *Penthouse* senior editor.

hammer time

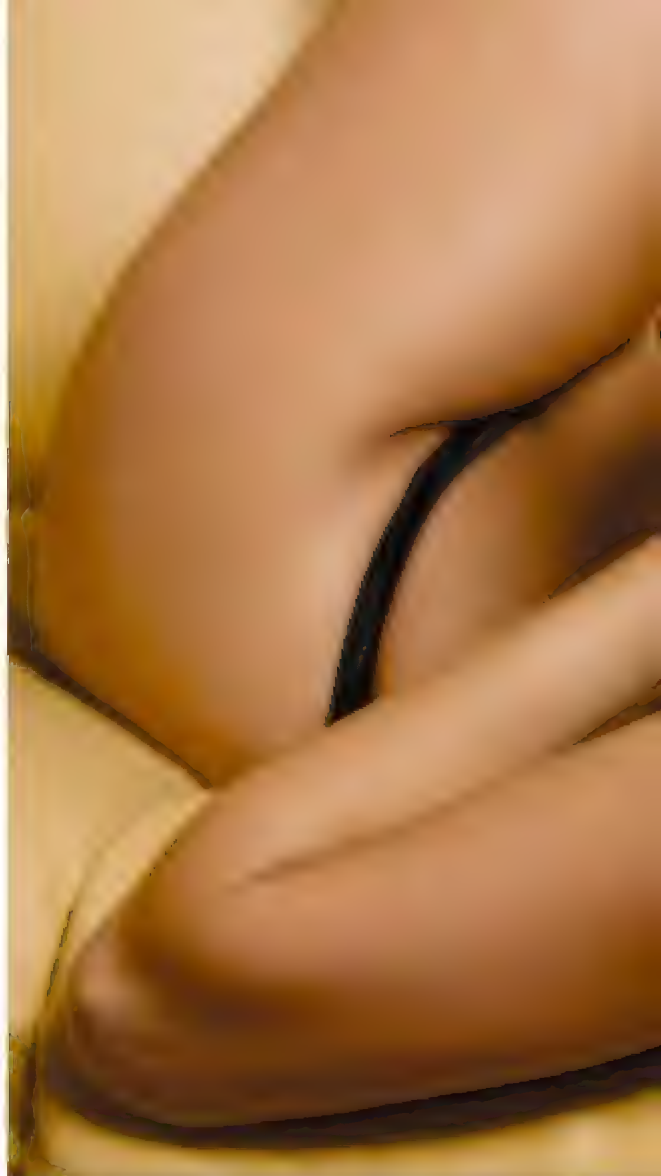
This 25-year-old sun devil from Arizona loves to kick back and take it easy, but when Jaime Hammer is interested in a guy, she's sure to make the first move. He won't know what hit him.

Photographs by Misha





"Here's how I roll: If I'm interested in someone, I'll kind of stare and make eye contact. If he's digging it, then I approach him. I'm pretty bold."





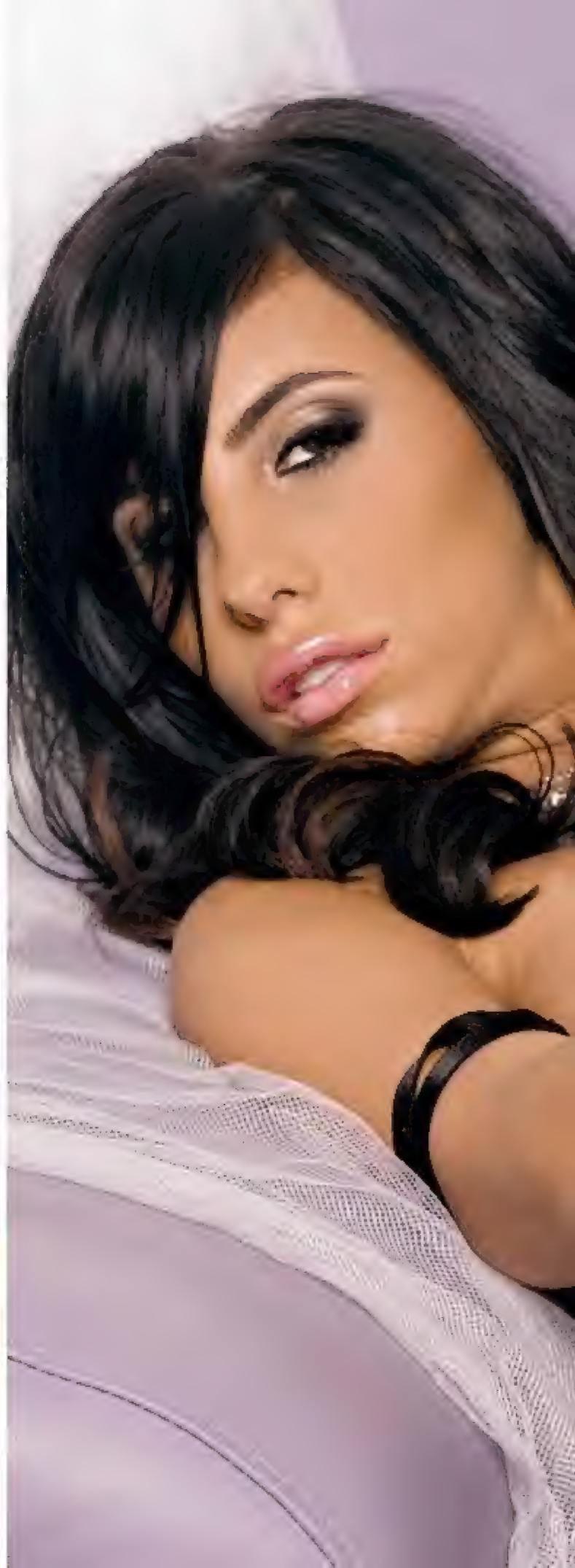




"College was nonstop partying. Every day there were pool parties and people getting hammered. Arizona's kind of boring, so people drink a lot and have lots of sex."



"Modeling has given me independence that I never dreamed of. When I got out of college I was on my own, and now I can buy a new car and other nice things and travel. I'm doing everything I ever wanted to do."





"I wouldn't mind being Carmen Electra for a day—just to be in her body—because she is really hot and she can dance. That girl can move. I can't dance worth crap."



Q. Jaime Hammer
Pet of the Month
November 2007

Vital stats:

25 years old, 5'0"
 32-24-33

Qualities you like most in yourself:

"I have the three Bs: brains, beauty, boobs."

Quality you like most in others:

"I like people who are dependable."

Biggest risk you've ever taken:

"Posing nude. You don't know what the consequences are going to be."

Were you a wild teenager?

"My best friend and I were out getting smashed at bars every weekend. We'd stay out until 6 A.M. and smoke pot and do all kinds of crazy stuff."

What gets you excited?

"Traveling and shopping"

What gets you in trouble?

"Shopping is my vice."

Favorite sound:

"Swiping a credit card"

Pick any place on your body for an erogenous zone:

"My neck"

Worst job you've ever had:

"When I was 15 I was a maintenance girl for a summer camp. I cleaned toilets, washed six loads of dishes a day, and took out the garbage. It was disgusting."

Sexiest quality a man can possess:

"Being successful at what he does. Even if he owns a garbage-truck company, if he's successful, that's hot to me."

What moment would you most like to relive?

"Graduating from Arizona State. That was a huge accomplishment."

Jaime Hammer

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♂ THE BIG RIP

♂ JAIME HAMMER
NOVEMBER 2007 PENTHOUSE PET OF THE MONTH



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JAMIE HAMMER
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NOVEMBER 2007 PENTHOUSE PET OF THE MONTH



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01-20 JAIME HAMMER
NOVEMBER 2007 PENTHOUSE PET OF THE MONTH





Payday lenders, like this one on Coast Highway outside the huge Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base in California, swarm military bases.

Soldiers of Misfortune

Following time-honored loan-shark techniques, predatory lenders target vulnerable GIs and their families and threaten our national security.

By Anya Kamenetz

Many lowlife enterprises pop up around military bases: tattoo parlors of questionable hygiene, overpriced pawn shops, and dingy dive bars.

Some provide entertainment, cheap food, and booze to troops on a budget. Others only leech off them—these are the payday cash-advance loan stores that lurk quietly on streets with names like Victory Drive and All American Avenue.

The signs adorning their windows advertise quick solutions to difficult problems: CASH NOW! PAYDAY LOANS... GUARANTEED!

Abusive lenders bleed \$80 million from military families every year through excessive fees. And in the past couple of years, they have been increasingly targeting our troops, taking advantage of the financial stress caused by extended deployments. It's no wonder that Major General Mike Lehnert, commanding general of Marine Corps Bases Installations West, describes these vultures as "parasites, bottom-feeders, and scumbags." And they come in many guises and with a lot of tempting bait: car-title loans, tax-refund anticipation, installment loans, and pawnshops.

Predatory lending is a cancer that's metastasized thanks to a decade of freewheeling credit laws and growing consumer debt. Here's an all-too-typical example of how victims are snared: A payday lender instantly provides a small chunk of change in exchange for a postdated check. According to the terms, you're expected to pay that back within two weeks, plus interest and fees. But very few actually make the due date.

"Take somebody who has a personal emergency," says Uriah King, of the Center for Responsible Lending, a watchdog group. "They get \$300. Two weeks later, what are the chances they can pay it back plus 400 percent interest?" Indeed, it's far more common to let the loan roll over into the next two weeks—and the next, and the next. Loan flipping, rollovers, refinancing, and excessive charges are hallmarks of the business. And the business is built on nothing short of debt slavery.

"The interest rate may be 700 percent, 1,000 percent—outside Fort Washington [in Maryland], there was a business charging 1,800 percent," says Lieutenant Colonel Greg Mason of Army Emergency Relief. And they are thick as thieves (pun intended). It's a \$40 billion industry with 23,000 storefronts nationwide—almost twice as many as McDonald's.

Members of the military are three times more likely than civilians to take out a payday loan. One study found that the zip code at the southern gate of Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base

in Oceanside, California, has 22 payday lenders—17 more than what would be expected based on Oceanside's population.

"There's a number of reasons these lenders target the military," says King. Like all sleazy con artists, they prefer to prey on the easiest victims and, as King points out, today's GIs are "largely younger, less sophisticated. Many times it's their first income and they're a long way from family and that support network."

For the payday-loan corporations, the situation is a godsend: a guaranteed flow of mostly young and financially naive customers, isolated and far from home. And beyond this vulnerability, predatory lenders are well aware that service members have tremendous incentives to repay, even though the terms on these loans are terrible. Army regulations mandate that soldiers keep their finances in order, and lenders often capitalize on this fact by making borrowers sign papers that state they can be subject to imprisonment if a loan isn't paid back. That's a wild exaggeration, but serious debt problems can, in some cases, lead to a dishonorable discharge. Peter Kahre, a recently retired naval officer, told the National Consumer Law Center how lenders keep their victims in line: "If you miss even one payment, they'd contact your commanding officer."

And, as Uriah King points out, it's not an exaggeration to say that financial difficulties can hamper a military career. Because a person with money problems is a tempting victim for enemy spies as well as predatory lenders, he says that "the military has been seeing a drastic increase in the denial of security clearances for financial reasons."

Sue Ellen, a 26-year-old Marine wife at Camp Pendleton who preferred not to give her last name, has two young kids and a husband scheduled to be deployed overseas by the end of the year. She is a typical victim. When her family was relocated from Alabama to California, they ended up thousands of miles from family and friends. "When we came out here, we had no resources," she says. "We didn't know anything. We lived here for a month and a half without furniture, without pots and pans."

The couple purchased a kitchen table from a rent-to-own shop. "It's supposed to be 'military friendly,'" Sue Ellen says. "You pay payments on it. You can't take it back, or we would have. Then we needed ordinary stuff for the house. We got a personal loan for that; we also bought a used car and then had to turn around and put \$4,000 into a transmission."

Later, Sue Ellen found out there was a warehouse on base

Military Injustice

where the family could have borrowed the furniture and things they needed. She also discovered that rent-to-own places typically charge rental fees that amount to three or four times the actual worth of an item. But it was too late. "No good luck," she says cheerfully, as the baby starts crying. Today, they're putting more than half of Sue Ellen's salary toward their piles of debt. They had to apply to a private charity for assistance to buy food.

One reason the military is especially vulnerable is that we Americans—for whom many of these young people put their lives at risk—don't pay them a living wage. Junior enlisted men and women, for example, make less than \$30,000, and that's a big problem for the 79 percent of military families who must pay down credit-card debt. A third of junior enlisted personnel say they have financial problems.

Peter Kahre provides a horrifying example of how easy it is to be sucked in—and under—by payday lenders. When he left for sea duty, Kahre's meager monthly pay was cut by \$197 to account for the meals he was getting onboard. With a new baby at home, the family was strapped for cash and decided to take out "just one loan." That one loan escalated to a final total of almost \$3,000 from nine different lenders. But as Kahre rolled over one loan to pay for the next, he ended up paying back an incredible \$20,000 on the borrowed money before he cascaded into bankruptcy. "You talk about someone the system took advantage of," he told the National Consumer Law Center. "I was the idiot. You get into it thinking you can get out of it real quick, and some people can and some can't."

Laura, a military wife and mom, is one person who couldn't. Her husband is on his second deployment, 15 months in Iraq. Like Sue Ellen, Laura asked to remain anonymous because she's humiliated by her experience with payday loans. "That hell," she says, "I would not wish on my worst enemy."

Laura continues, "I was part of the working poor, where you're maybe \$50 short here and there. That's how it starts off. You're usually pretty close to getting by, you maybe need gas money for the week, so you start to go to these places."

Laura says military culture doesn't encourage families to reach out for help. "Military wives are forced to become very independent," she says. "You think, *He's over there, he's in the middle of a war, I'm not going to bother him with this. If I distract him from his job, he could get killed.*"

Over a period of four years, Laura took out loans "maybe a hundred times," she says. "It sickens me to quantify it. You get a loan for \$200 and you end up paying back anywhere from \$235 to \$295 and you just aggravate the cycle. Every payday I'd be rolling it over. If you borrow \$300, the rollover charge might be \$75, and so within three times you're paying back the whole balance. But it just keeps growing." She finally swallowed her pride and got loans from friends and family members to pay off her debt.

In a very real sense, we are all potential victims of these predators. "Military-base commanders are saying this is hampering our ability to protect national security, harming morale and troop readiness," King says. "Soldiers are worrying about 'How can I pay back this loan?', not about their mission."

How can payday lending be legal? Actually, in 11 states it's not, but many companies exploit legal loopholes. The Pentagon is well aware of the predatory lending problem. In fact, it issued a 92-page report last year documenting the concentration of predatory lenders around military bases, online marketing to the military, and the accompanying exorbitant prices and fees.

Fortunately, there are alternatives—decent ones—to the trap of predatory lenders (see sidebar). Lieutenant Colonel Greg Mason works with one of these alternatives, Army Emergency Relief (AER), which provides emergency interest-free loans for military members. But he explains that for many soldiers, embarrassment, lack of knowledge, and convenience make the predatory trap very tempting.

"The interest rate may be 700 percent, 1,000 percent. Outside Fort Washington, there was a business charging 1,800 percent."



WHEN PLUNGING INTO HOLIDAY SPENDING, DON'T GET IN OVER YOUR HEAD.

Defense
BILLBOARD

The military is finally beefing up its financial-readiness education as part of basic

training, because forewarned is forearmed. These dramatic billboard posters prepared by the Department of Defense are part of the campaign.

IN FINANCIAL STRAITS?

A regular savings plan can help navigate troubled waters.

Getting Financial Help

Fortunately, there are several decent alternatives for military personnel and their families lured by the lure of predatory lending.

MILITARY RESOURCES

- Reach out to your commanding officer. You won't be punished for coming forward.
- On many bases, family support centers offer personal financial-education programs.
- Army Emergency Relief (AERHQ.org), Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS.org), Air Force Aid Society (AFAS.org), and Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMAHQ.org) offer interest-free loans.
- The Better Business Bureau's Military Line (Military.bbb.org) identifies good businesses and maintains a registry of complaints.
- On Military Sentinel, you can file complaints directly with law enforcement (Consumer.gov/military).
- Troops Against Predatory Scams (Corp.ca.gov/outreach/taps.htm) offers information on predatory lending.
- Military Money magazine (MilitaryMoney.com) covers all aspects of personal finance.
- The Defense Credit Union Council provides a state-by-state list of low-interest-loan providers (DCUC.org).

OTHER RESOURCES

- Center for Responsible Lending (ResponsibleLending.org)
- Consumer Federation of America (ConsumerFed.org)
- National Consumer Law Center (ConsumerLaw.org)

"You can get a loan from a payday lender in less than five minutes," Mason says. "All you have to do is go to a shop, show them your ID card, and tell them you're active duty. They know you've got a paycheck and they give you the money. [A soldier] knows he's got it instantaneously, no questions asked." With AER loans, soldiers do have to answer some questions about bills and their ability to repay them, but, knowing this paperwork has driven military people into the hands of predators, AER now allows a service member's direct commander to authorize assistance requests. This streamlines the process and softens the shame of looking for outside help. The military is also beefing up its financial-readiness education as part of basic training, because forewarned is forearmed.

On the recommendation of an August 2006 Pentagon report, Congress passed the Military Lending Act last year, limiting annual interest rates on all "consumer lending" to military members at 36 percent. While a maximum of 36 percent still sounds outrageously high, it could be enough to put most of these predatory lenders out of business—if the law is enforced correctly. And that's where the battle lies now. The law took effect on October 1, 2007. The problem is that Congress left it up to the Department of Defense to decide who is covered under the law. Predictably, bank and credit-union lobbies lined up to make sure it was applied as narrowly as possible.

Consumer advocates are worried that the teeth will come out of this law. "Our concern is that the Defense Department has grossly over-narrowed the statute," King says. In June, the Center for Responsible Lending cosigned a public statement to the Pentagon with several other groups, including the National Consumer Law Center, urging them to revise the rules. They wrote, "We believe that the loopholes in the proposed rules are so wide that service members would feel very little impact from the implementation of the law."

The regulation as drafted at press time left out installment loans with terms of more than 91 days, credit cards with crazy-high charges and fees, bank accounts that sting people with overdraft charges, rent-a-centers like the one where Sue Ellen got her kitchen table, and any loan greater than \$2,000. Online military-installment loans, one of the Pentagon's main concerns according to its own report, would not be covered. Payday lenders can make small changes to existing loan terms and stay in business. Perhaps most egregious, the legislation exempts payday-style small loans just because they happen to be made by federally insured banks. Do we really want our nation's giant banks getting into the fleece-the-military business? As one industry magazine, *American Banker*, reported in April, the mainstream banking lobby was happy with how narrowly the law was being construed. "It certainly could have been worse," says Joe Crouse, legislative and regulatory counsel at the Consumer Bankers Association. "If they hadn't narrowed it, we could have had a lot of problems." Yes, fewer warriors to exploit.

The Pentagon has nine months beyond the October 1 effective date to refine the law and close loopholes. King points out that where there's a true legislative will, there's a way: Georgia and North Carolina have effectively banned payday lending. All the Defense Department has to do, he says, is "look at what the states have done."

But beyond this, we can dare to hope that if an effective national law is passed to protect the military, it might trigger a reexamination of the mess our credit laws have made of too many nonmilitary families' finances. That would be, in a very major sense, a real victory for American homeland security. **OT**

Anya Kamenetz is a contributing writer at *Fast Company*. She writes the "Generation Debt" column for Yahoo! at Finance.Yahoo.com. Her book, *Generation Debt* (Riverhead), is now in paperback. Johnny Rico did additional reporting for this story.

Hajime Sorayama

Sexy. Surreal. Out of this world. Over the years, the inner visions of Hajime Sorayama have remixed the classic pinup, put Mickey Mouse through a time machine, and inspired countless impure thoughts. Here, Penthouse gets a glimpse of his rich fantasy life.

Interview by Kayoko Sazuki-Lange







The artist with his rendering of a futuristic Mickey Mouse (above); Sony's AIBO (right).

Ever since Hajime Sorayama first began sharing his surreally sexy visions with *Penthouse* in 1994, he's occupied a particular place of honor for anyone with a taste for exquisite perversions. What started as realistic renderings of gorgeous Vargas-style pinups evolved into fantastical renderings of sci-fi eroticism, human robots, chimeras, even Mickey Mouse. Today, Sorayama never fails to provoke, whether he's designing robotic dogs for Sony or mining the wealth of fantasies in his head, even when he merely hopes to entertain. We thought his illustrations demanded an encore viewing and some insight from the master himself.

Your work appeared in *Penthouse* for more than a decade, starting in 1994. What effect did that association have?
It had both positive and negative effects on my career. *Penthouse* helped make my name and work known worldwide, but when Disney Japan approached me with the project of creating a metallic Mickey Mouse, Disney America made a fuss about how I'd worked for *Penthouse*. America has so many double standards. It's a very interesting country.

How did you start working for *Penthouse*?
I made copies of my work and sent them to the publisher. Then they picked some out and ran them for 12 issues or so. Most of them couldn't be published in Japan because of censorship there, but lucky for me, America wasn't strict on censorship. It wasn't a problem to ship my work out through Japanese Customs, but everything was confiscated on the way back. So all my work had to stay in America.

Where do you find inspiration?

I get concepts from novels and movies. I rarely get inspired by photos or illustrations. When I read novels, especially aesthetic novels, I read between the lines, create images in my head, and fantasize. I love fantasizing in the middle of the day. That's my hobby!

How do you translate your fantasies to such detailed paintings?

I spend long hours executing them, very patiently. Anybody with a so-so talent can paint like me. Just spend long hours!

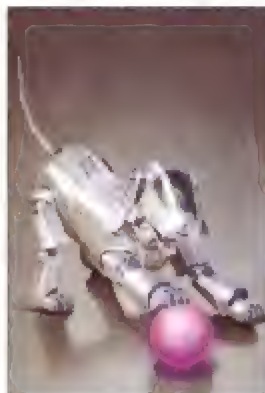
You started out with classic pinup girls, but your style changed to sexy robots, hybrids of women and animals, and S&M. How did your work evolve that way?

Pinup was a popular form back then, but I got bored with it quickly. I just felt like a new universe had opened up to me, and the possibilities were endless. My style matured, over-matured, then fermented. The pinup girls were for high school kids.

So you developed those new figures to stimulate men who *really* know how to fantasize—

They're intended for very experienced, mature men who want to feel alive again, who crave a more complex fantasy or something darker. I'd call it hallucination. I just want to show something nobody has seen before. I'm an entertainer, entertaining my fans

with brand-new fantasies, and I love to receive a standing ovation!



Your robotic figures are very popular. You designed Sony's robot dog, AIBO; the cover of Aerosmith's *Just Push Play*; and the metallic Mickey Mouse. People love your vision of the future.

People are fascinated with my metallic forms because they are unrealistically curvy and supple. There's no such thing as elastic or stretchable metal; in the fashion and apparel world, people mimic the

metal feel with fabric or knit, but they can't achieve the look of real high-reflective metal no matter what they try. This futuristic look attracts movie directors. Currently I'm involved with two Hollywood projects—one is a sci-fi movie with director Robert Rodriguez.

You also use airplanes as a motif. Why?

I have a huge fascination with airplanes. As a matter of fact, I wanted to be a pilot but my eyesight wasn't good enough. I study the unique character and history of each model, and try to express their beauty through my passion for them.

You were born right after World War II. Why does war imagery play a part in your work?

I didn't experience the war, so I have a twisted sort of nostalgia about it. I'm attracted to things I've never seen before. That's why I'm also hugely fascinated with dinosaurs. I go berserk looking at those 3-D dinosaur animations.

Is that what inspired those hybrid animal-women?

Not quite. The horns are more for an aggressive effect. To make the woman look like a queen of discipline, a dominatrix. That's why I have them wear pin heels [stilettos]. They could really hurt you.

You've also done many bondage illustrations. Are you personally interested in S&M?

No! I don't want to hurt or be hurt. I get this question all the time, but it's a matter of how objective you can be toward your subject matter. I mean, an actor who never drinks can be good at playing



"They're intended for very experienced, mature men who want to feel alive again, who crave a more complex fantasy or something darker. I'd call it hallucination. I just want to show something nobody has seen before."

Penthouse Portfolio

a drunk, and some transvestites look and act more feminine than real women. People who have the ability to observe themselves offstage can perform realistically, and with a greater impact.

Do you ever get bored drawing women?

When I die, I will! Even if I get too old to use my equipment I'll keep drawing them, hallucinating them in my head. I don't think I'll need Viagra like Hugh Hefner. Even if you are with an unattractive woman, just close your eyes and use your natural hallucination skills. It should work!

How do you exercise your natural hallucination skills?

I can do it all day in my garden. That's where my imaginary magic mushrooms grow. It's good for my health and there's no risk being caught by Interpol. The only complaints are from my wife about me spending too much time in my garden.

If I opened up your head and videotaped your fantasies, what would I see?

It would look like a cross between an animal shelter and a public-health center. Some outrageous things are happening, and I'd better not tell you. You won't be able to print them anyway.

Your subjects are never totally nude. Why?

I study real clothes and accessories, and I use them to communicate with viewers. These elements give a sense of reality to my figures and help captivate viewers. When I work, my first priority is to communicate with my audience. I've never been interested in self-gratification.

What has drawing women taught you about them?

They never teach me a thing! I don't understand women at all—that's why I create fantasy women. My work has nothing to do with real, in-the-flesh women. They are the lovers I've never met and never will meet. They live in utopia. They are mature women



who take risks and who take responsibility for the risks. They know that ecstasy awaits them after the pain, like a runner's high. My women's hedonism is so strong that they don't mind running the risk of ending up in a coma.


You say your paintings sell well to lawyers, doctors, professionals. Why?

To understand my work, you need a lot of imagination and you need to be a good observer. My work can easily gross you out if you look at it just as a bunch of torture or humiliation scenes. Eroticism isn't widely exercised, so people get allergic reactions. Eroticism needs to be expressed freely and understood in its many different forms. We need pioneers who keep pushing the envelope and keep going to jail for breaking the law.


I guess that would be you, Mr. Sorayama.

Stop it. Everyone expects me to be the groundbreaker, but I just want to be in on what goes on—be a part of the dialogue, like a moderator.

You are Japanese, but your women are all Western. Why don't you draw Asian women?

They just don't sell! I sometimes draw Asian women for favors, but nobody buys those original drawings. I guess people still prefer blondes with blue eyes. 

ALL SORAYAMA IMAGES © SORAYAMA/ARTSPACE/UPTIGHT, 2007. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT SORAYAMA.NET OR CALL 212-252-9122.

A woman with blonde hair is lying on her side on a white surface. She is wearing a white, long-sleeved, button-down shirt that is open, revealing a white bra. She is also wearing high-heeled sandals. She is holding a large fish in her hands. Her right hand is raised to her forehead, and her left hand is holding the fish. She is looking directly at the camera.

"I don't understand women at all—that's why I create fantasy women. My work has nothing to do with real, in-the-flesh women. They are the lovers I've never met and never will meet. They live in utopia. They are mature women who take risks and who take responsibility for the risks."





"To understand my work, you need a lot of imagination and you need to be a good observer. My work can easily gross you out if you look at it just as a bunch of torture or humiliation scenes."

At Manhattan's VIP Club, a smokin' hot brunette grinds her perfect round ass on Jim Norton's lap. "He has a big one," the stripper says. "It knocks." But afterward, Norton, the bullet-headed comic perhaps best known as an Opie and Anthony sideman, is less than pleased. "I was bored," he says. "It can't go anywhere. It's like looking at cake through a window. I'm too perverted for that."

Anyone who's read Norton's hilarious best-seller, *Happy Endings: The Tales of a Meaty-Breasted Zilch*, which documents in unflinching detail his outrageous sexual exploits, knows just how true that is.

Lots of guys think they're sex addicts, but as Norton, 39, told me earlier in the evening at his comedy home, New York's famed Comedy Cellar, he is the real deal. Which is why strip clubs lost their allure for him long ago. "If I can't jerk off on the floor, I don't want to be there," says Norton, looking comedian-casual in jeans, a black T-shirt, and a necklace with an L pendant given to him by Pamela Adlon, his costar on the short-lived HBO sitcom *Lucky Louie*. "I get frustrated, because I wanna start handing over money and getting blown. I don't like to be titillated. It's a lie.

'Oooh, she rubbed her ass on me.' It's like, 'Fuckin' beat it. Will you piss in my mouth? No? Then fuck yourself.' I'm way beyond being titillated with my friends."

For Norton, it turns out that enduring a strip club is the equivalent of trying to pacify a heroin addict with a sleeping pill, since his sex addiction calls for much heavier artillery. "It does everything drugs do," he says of his pulsing desire for sex. "It makes your life unmanageable. I would jerk off till my back hurt. In a way, it's worse than alcohol because of the mental obsession. You'll sit in the airport pinching your dick waiting for your flight. There are so many ways to have sex wreck your life."

Norton claims he has been sexually active since the second or third grade, as he famously chronicled in his "Monster Rain" anecdote, when he and other boys would play with each other under a porch because, at that point, he explains, "pussies frightened me."

But his fear of girl parts didn't last. "It was like watching *Citizen Kane*," he says, recalling an early introduction to the female posterior. "I'll never forget the texture of her ass, the smoothness. I've been an ass fan ever since."

Orgasm Addict

Jim Norton used to have a \$1,000-a-day sex habit. Now he has a girlfriend. He'll be squirming about it on HBO this month.



Norton had his first prostitute at 19, forming a habit he estimates has cost him "hundreds of thousands of dollars." His addiction has led him down a wild path. "I brought a pregnant hooker downstairs one time, and she sparked up a crack pipe in my dead grandmother's living room," he recalls. "And I'm like, 'This is not healthy behavior.'" His addiction has included hookers, Internet porn, dominatrices, and a two-year period he calls "self-destructive" and "awful," during which he had women use him like a public restroom. Even more twisted, he sometimes asked hookers to say "I love you" while they fucked.

Occasionally, he'd get up to three pros a day, spending as much as a grand. "It's not about them. It's about the inappropriateness of it," he explains. "The high in the prostitute is the knock at the door, the unexpected. Then she leaves and you're \$300 lighter, with the same vacuum as before." Norton, who's never caught an STD save crabs (three times), hasn't limited his sex to prostitutes—he has indulged with various girlfriends and the women who've answered his classified ads seeking girls with a "fat pussy" (he says he likes it to "look like an M-80 just went off, just a Hubba Bubba mess").

Of course, talking publicly about his proclivities has had its

advantages. "I attract dirty girls," he says. "Really, you'd spit in my mouth? Yeah. I would." He's also cohosted the AVN Awards twice, and after the 2004 show he had a particularly special threesome. "I walk into a room and Ron Jeremy is fucking a girl on the bed," he says. "He goes, 'Hey, man. I think she needs a cock in her mouth,' and she's like, 'Yeah.' That was a highlight for me."

But Norton has spent the better part of the past year *without* the company of hired women, thanks largely to his new girlfriend, a fellow comic ten years his junior. "The temptation [of the hookers] isn't the sex. It's the loneliness. So if she's over all the time, I don't feel lonely. I have fun with her." The fact that she's a "normal girl" adds a new level of excitement. "She doesn't wanna be pissed on or spit on or slapped, and that's a turn-on," he says. "If she was kind of a pervert," he explains, "it probably wouldn't be enough for me."

This radical new phase of his life has inspired new material, which viewers can see in Norton's HBO special, *Monster Rain*, airing this month. Norton feels his relationship helps him appeal to fans on a deeper level. "They relate to me more now, because I can't do what I want to do. I'm a filth bag in the confines of a

"I would jerk off till my back hurt. In a way, it's worse than alcohol because of the mental obsession. You'll sit in the airport pinching your dick waiting for your flight. There are so many ways to have sex wreck your life."



relationship. They understand that more than what I was doing."

Even so, *Happy Endings* peaked at number four on the *New York Times* best-seller list, proving that fans love a good series of filth-bag stories as well. "It's fucking great, man," he says of the book's surprising success. "I was ahead of Al Gore and all these other prestigious people. Like, 'Go fuck yourself with your global warming. People would rather hear about this shit.'"

And just as his fans yearn for his tawdry tales, that lifestyle will always hold a special place in his heart. Does he miss the prostitutes? "Of course!" he says emphatically. "When you fight with your girlfriend, who doesn't wanna pay someone to suck your dick? I wanna pay the maid of honor to suck it for \$50 on my wedding night." Then he lets out a slight laugh. "It's torture," he says. "Every day is torture."



Jim Norton's Five

At the height (or low point, depending on your perspective) of his days as a practicing sex addict, Jim Norton kept many hookers on speed dial. These were his five favorites.

5
4
3
2
1

JABBA THE CUNT

"She had a really fat pussy. The sight of her pussy over my face was one of the greatest sexual thrills I've ever had. I would have signed over the house to her, but she wanted too much money. But I've never been more washed-over with lust."

EXTRALEGAL PARALEGAL

"She worked in the legal profession and moonlighted as a hooker. I actually fucked her with no rubber on. I kind of wanted to knock her up—that was fucking crazy. That was bad. That could have been a mess."

THE DOMINATRIX

"She was beautiful. She would golden-shower me. She did it because I needed it to be done—she pissed on me because I deserved it. A real pervert."

THE INGENUE

"This one was a college student—a masseuse—who refused to do anything. She said, 'I can't do this, it's wrong... and besides, I can get more money other places.' I gave her an extra hundred and she sucked my dick."

NURSE PIG

"Then there was Nurse Pig in Vegas. I almost let her hit me with a strap-on, but I just couldn't. She started to and I went, 'No, stop!' She said okay, and then spit on me instead. She was a complete filth pig, Nurse Pig. She would piss on me and then we'd fuck. I don't believe she had a real medical license, though. I question her medical credentials."

"I brought a pregnant hooker downstairs one time, and she sparked up a crack pipe in my dead grandmother's living room. And I'm like, 'This is not healthy behavior.'"

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK HATFIELD/ABC



key party: 2007 club contest

We flew in five of our most electrifying Key Girls from Penthouse Clubs across the country to compete in our very first Pet contest. Pick up your cellphone to vote on which dancer will be the February 2008 Pet of the Month, but we're sure you'll agree that they're all winners.



Lana

CLUB

Penthouse Club Detroit

AGE

25

STATS

36C-24-36

FAVORITE SONG TO DANCE TO ONSTAGE

"Woke up This Morning," by A3
EVER MADE OUT WITH A GIRL TO MAKE A BOY JEALOUS?
 "I kissed a girl in front of my boyfriend at a bar and he got so jealous! It worked because then we had great sex."

SHOT OF JACK OR A COSMOPOLITAN?

"Jack!"

THE MOST EXPENSIVE GIFT YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED

"A Bentley worth \$230,000."

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TINY DOGS IN PURSES?

"I have a little Pomeranian named Prince. I buy purses from Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, just for him."

DO YOU WANT BIGGER TITS OR A FULLER ASS?

"Both! I want big boobs and a big ass, but I think I'm perfect."

Turn to page 105 to cast your vote for Lana.

Heather

CLUB

Penthouse Executive Club
 New York

AGE

25

STATS

34C-24-35

FAVORITE SONG TO DANCE TO ONSTAGE

"Like a Boy," by Clara
EVER MADE OUT WITH A GIRL TO MAKE A BOY JEALOUS?

"My friend and I went out to a bar and my ex was there with his new girl. We made out in front of him until he wanted to kill himself."

SHOT OF JOHN MAYER?

"If you want it hard and rough, if you just want to fuck—50 Cent. If you want to make love and write poetry together, John Mayer."

THE MOST EXPENSIVE GIFT YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED

"A Tiffany bracelet from an ex that cost \$30,000."

DO YOU WANT BIGGER TITS OR A FULLER ASS?

"Definitely more of an ass."

Turn to page 105 to cast your vote for Heather.



Cali

CLUB

Penthouse Club St. Louis

AGE

19

STATS

32D-25-33

FAVORITE SONG TO DANCE

TO ONSTAGE

"California Love," by Tupac

EVER MADE OUT WITH A GIRL

TO MAKE A BOY JEALOUS?

"Yes! When guys see girls

kiss onstage they make it rain, which means they throw a bunch of money."

FAVORITE WAY TO GET OFF SOLO?

"Vibrator and a porno. My vibrator's name is Sparkles."

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TINY DOGS IN PURSES?

"I have a toy pug named Jack that I carry in my purse."

THE BIGGEST TIP YOU'VE

EVER RECEIVED?

"The most I've made off one guy is \$2,700."

DO YOU WANT BIGGER TITS OR A FULLER ASS?

"Fuller butt, just 'cause I'm lacking."

Turn to page 105 to cast your vote for Cali.

Gina

2007

Penthouse Club Chicago

AGE

24

STATE

32B-25-33

FAVORITE SONG TO DANCE
TO ONSTAGE

"Seven Nation Army," by White
Stripes

EVER MADE OUT WITH A GIRL
TO MAKE A BOY JEALOUS?

"I was at the same party as an
ex and there was a beautiful
girl there, and after a few shots
it just happened."

FAVORITE WAY TO GET LEE
SOLAR

"Vibrator, watching a porno."

EGGENT OR JOHN MAYER?

"John Mayer. I'm not into rap."

SMITH OR JAGGED A READER

"Cosmo, definitely."

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT
TINY DOGS IN DISNEY?

"I have two Great Danes. I'm a
big-dog person."

Turn to page 105 to cast your
vote for Gina.



Senna

CLUB

Penthouse Executive Club
New York

AGE

23

STATS

34D-24-34

FAVORITE SONG TO DANCE

TO ON STAGE

"Self Control," by Laura
Branigan

EVER MADE OUT WITH A GIRL

TO MAKE A BOY JEALOUS

"Yeah"

SHOT OF JACK OR A COSMO

"Cosmo, definitely. I love
vodka."

TO CENT FOR JOHN MAVERICK

"Beastie Boys"

FAVORITE WAY TO GET HER

SALOS

"My silver bullet. Works every
time."

THE BIGGEST TIP YOU'VE

EVER RECEIVED

"\$5,000"

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT

TINY DOGS IN BUSTLES?

"I have a miniature Pomeranian
and I carry him in my Louis
Vuitton bag."

DO YOU WANT BIGGER

TITS OR A FULLER ASS?

"Neither. I love myself!"

Turn to page 105 to cast your
vote for Senna.

"I got in plenty of fights in high school. I was a cheerleader and people didn't like me, so I had to take them down."—*Cali*





"I love going to shooting ranges. I'm the random blonde skinny girl with huge boobs and a nine-mil or an M16." —*Heather*





"I just love the attention, and I like it when people are jealous. I love the haters, because they're your biggest fans." —*Lana*

"I love to travel. I love partying in Vegas and Miami. I always have good sex in Vegas. I go all the time." —
Senya



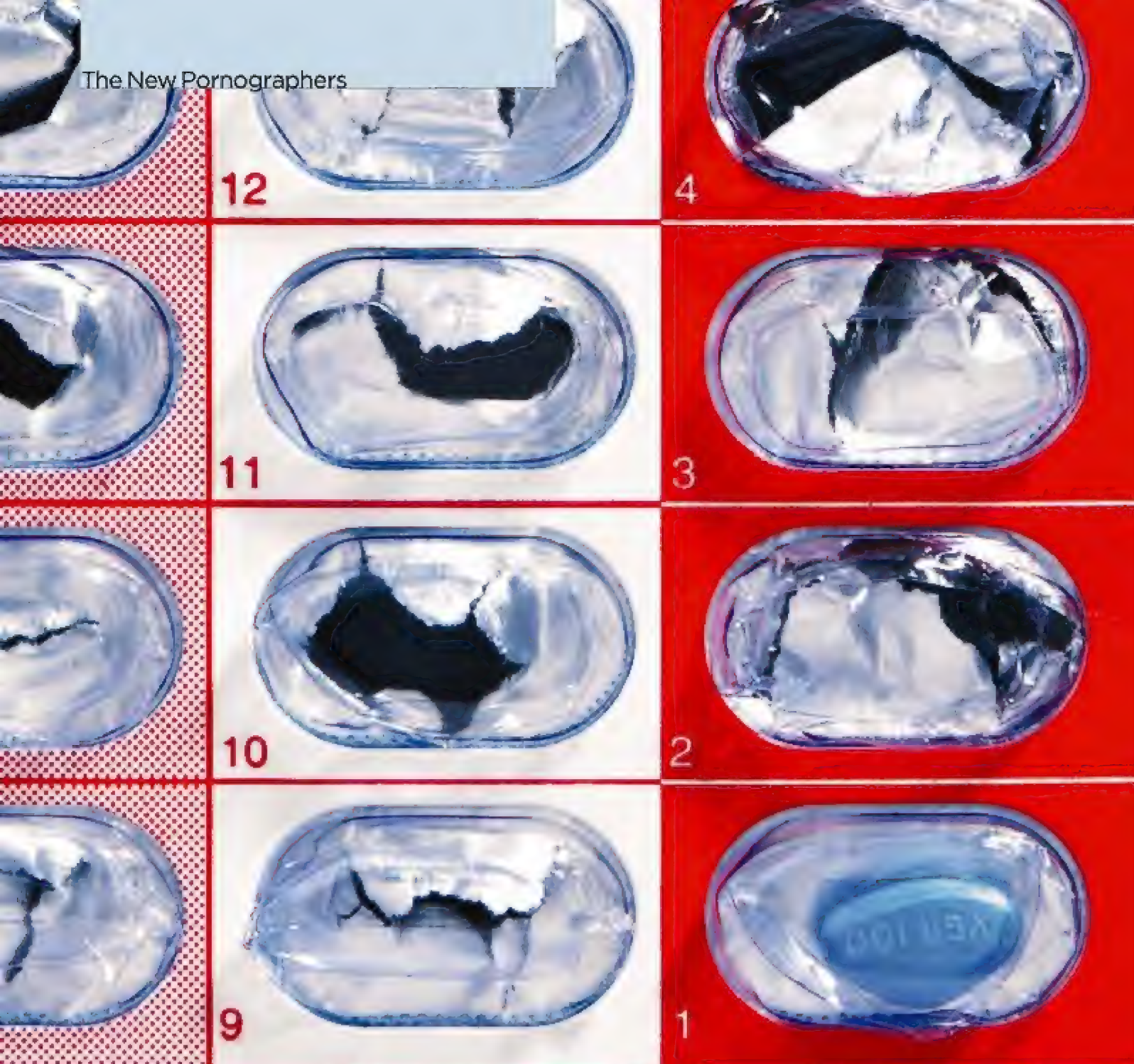


"I'd never wear fur. And yes, my position to never wear fur extends to my private area." —Gina



You've seen what our Key Girls have to offer—now it's time to vote for the February 2008 Pet of the Month. Turn to page 105 to cast your vote today!





There's a scene in *Boogie Nights* where porn star Dirk Diggler, while tweaking on meth, insists to his director that they have to shoot a scene "right now!" The crank has killed his dick, and if he doesn't fuck that very second, his hard-on will become a memory. This was director Paul Thomas Anderson's way of telling us that Dirk had become a loser. It turns out that Anderson was being prescient, as yesterday's fictional loser is today's real-life, highly paid porn star—but instead of meth, the drug driving his rigid schedule (and rigid member) is Viagra.

Throughout porn history, the male stars were those who could control their cocks and their come with marksman-like precision and timing, which is why such a small group of men dominated the industry for so long. But the past five years have seen a deepening of the seminal pool, as Viagra, Cialis, and other erection enhancers have allowed any Tom, Dick, or Harry to dip his wick into the vast ocean of pornographic pussy.

As a result, the porn world is awash in inept woodsmen, many of whom must time their drug use almost to the minute in order to produce and maintain a hard-on, instead of relying on the erection producer we were born with—pure, unadulterated lust. In today's porn universe, sexual arousal has been replaced, for many, by drug management, leaving the genre's veterans believing that excitement and sexual desire have been sucked out of the business.

"This is the age of the dispassionate porn star," veteran director-performer Paul Thomas says, referring to the new men of porn as "often downright inept" at the old in/out. Most male porn actors nowadays are hard from the get-go with "no inspiration necessary," says Thomas, resulting in "perfunctory" and "mechanical" scenes. Often, he says, "the hips are moving at warp speed while the face is placid, distant, almost bored. The end result is efficient, by-the-numbers videos performed by forgettable, robotic youth—lacking the passion that comes from experience."



Seeing Red Over the Little Blue Pill

You thought baseball had a drug problem? Performance enhancers have changed the adult industry forever and created a new breed of porn star: the red-faced "Viagra boy."

*By Larry Getlen
Photographs by Nick Ferrari*



Porn legend Randy West agrees. "My whole thing was working with a girl I had chemistry with," he says. "Now it's, 'Hey, my dick's hard. Sit on it and we'll make some money.' It makes for a rougher type of sex—like, who can out-pound who?"

Even those on the pro-enhancer side don't dispute this. "The business is different now," says ten-year veteran Nick Manning, who uses Viagra in about half his scenes to beef up his shooting schedule and, therefore, his income. "It used to be that whatever hard-on you had, they shot it and off you went. Now, you gotta pick 'em up, flip 'em around, and 46 positions later, you wrap. It looks like the X Games. We're fucking girls into a coma."

For some, this athleticism kills the sense of camaraderie that male porn consumers enjoyed with the old guard. While the new breed may be sturdier, the old standbys were often more Average Joe than G.I. Joe, which made it easier for the viewer to project himself into the fantasy. "Guys who watched these films liked seeing some of their buddies, guys they could relate to," says old-school legend Ron Jeremy. "It was like, here's my buddy Ron, here's my buddy Peter North, here's John Holmes with that big giant penis on a new girl. They wouldn't rent the film because of us—it was still the woman who was the draw—but they liked seeing some familiar faces."

These days, viewers hoping for the porn equivalent of their buddy from work (or themselves) are out of luck—industry professionals estimate that 80 to almost 100 percent of performers use some form of chemical enhancement. Pharmaceuticals have allowed for more shoots and—for porn's increasingly female consumer base—better-looking actors. Today's porn studs seem to have stepped, shorn and exfoliated, right off the pages of a Calvin Klein ad. Instead of a Cheetos-and-Ring Dings physique like Ron Jeremy's, now there is the jutting jaw and chiseled frame of Jack Venice; or Voodoo's spiky-haired, surfer-boy persona; or the taut muscles of Nick Manning, whose Website photos convey an image that's more Latin lover than pizza lover.

"In the past, the adult-film industry could only use men who had the natural ability to maintain an erection for long periods of time under very difficult conditions," says Derek Hay, a veteran performer, Cialis advocate, and owner of L.A. Direct Models, one of the porn industry's leading modeling agencies. "With products such as Viagra, the producers no longer have to take a guy, no matter what he looks like, just because he can do it."

"A lot more women are watching porn now, and they really wanna see a good-looking guy fucking a girl," says Voodoo. "If you go to the adult-video conventions, there's, like, 50 percent women walking through there these days. And they're demanding equal quality in the male porn stars. They don't want it to be just a hot chick being fucked by some big old hairy dude."

Viagra and its ilk have also helped negate one of porn's traditional problems—time spent waiting for an actor to get hard, which in the past had the potential to delay production

and siphon money from the producer's pockets as on-the-clock cast and crew waited around for inspiration to rise. But the savings from instant erections are often negated by time spent waiting for Viagra's prolonged pop shot, and inexperienced performers—who are often ushered into the business on looks alone and granted instant ability by the little blue pills—may delay production with rookie issues, such as faded confidence. And for the women of porn, who have to endure the workmanlike fucking—as well as the drugs' side effects of red, sweaty faces and delayed climax—the advantages are often not worth the sacrifice.

"I prefer to work with a guy who's natural," says actress Delliah Strong. With only four years of experience, she's never known the industry without Viagra, but she calls it a cheap way out. "The guys on Viagra are very mechanical, and it feels fake. Viagra is for stamina, but that's not necessarily what you need in porn. You need to be able to fuck hard-core for 20 to 30 minutes and then come on command. Viagra prevents that. If somebody has to use it on a regular basis, they probably shouldn't be in the industry."

Nicole Sheridan, a veteran of more than 400 films, agrees with Strong. "To get a good scene, the guy has to enjoy what he's doing," she says. "A lot of the guys on chemicals are in the business for the wrong reason. They don't like women and they have this 'I'm gonna fuck the shit out of you' attitude. It's more to degrade you."

Though there's little time wasted waiting for wood these days, those behind the camera lament the long wait for the money shot that erection-enhancement drugs often cause. "There's so much riding on their being able to perform," says veteran director Kelly Holland, who currently serves as executive producer for Penthouse Digital Entertainment. "If we have a performance problem, it throws us into overtime at \$300 an hour; it burns the crew out; and it irritates the female talent, because now they're getting pounded to no avail. It's a killer."

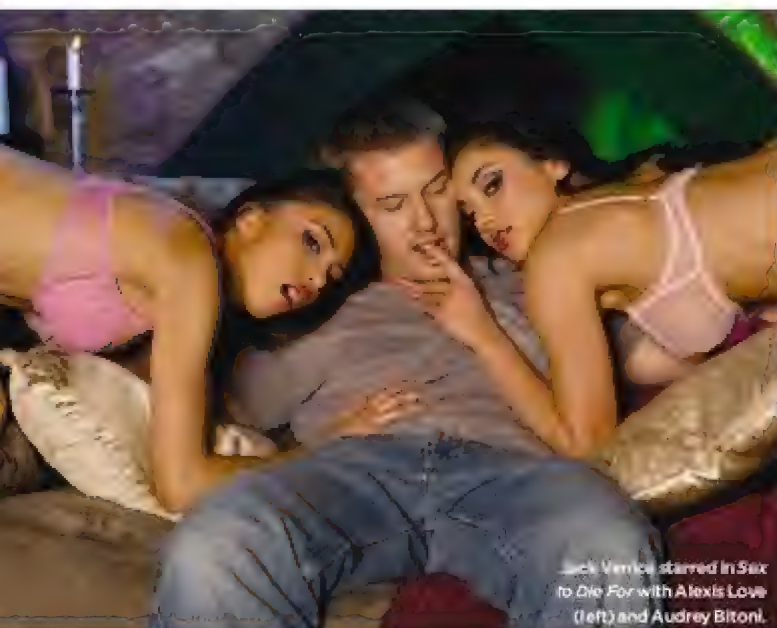
Part of the problem is also that these drugs make actors' erections time-sensitive—much like Dirk Diggler's in *Boogie Nights*—and as anyone in the film business (porn or otherwise) knows, hoping to shoot on schedule is like planning a quick visit to the DMV on your lunch break. "You have guys who say, 'Tell me 30 minutes before we do the scene,'" says Holland. "So you'll tell them, and invariably something comes up, and they get pushy—'Well, I need to do my scene.' You really have problems if you peak on Viagra and we haven't gotten to the scene."

Another, perhaps larger problem is that drugs alone cannot make someone a porn star. If a man is not completely comfortable with women, exhibitionism, having sex under hot lights, and coming on cue for an audience of bored, hungry crew members, Viagra may just temporarily hide his problems before it all comes crashing down. At least in pre-V times, you could either do the job or you couldn't.

"In the days before Viagra, talent was more professional," says Holland. "I have more problems now because you have more new, unsure guys, and Viagra will only take you so far. I've seen guys pop three Viagra and still not be able to get an erection. They overheat, they start sweating, their blood pressure goes through the roof, and you have to stop them and say, 'You know what? I don't want you having a heart attack on the set.'"

In addition to being generally easier to work with, the older generation of actors, according to many observers, was also more

"A lot of the guys on chemicals are in the business for the wrong reason. They don't like women and they have this 'I'm gonna fuck the shit out of you' attitude."



Jack Venice starred in *Six to Die For* with Alexis Love (left) and Audrey Bitoni.

sensual, more connected with their partners than the relative youngsters now employed as stunt cocks—especially since back then, foreplay was as much a physiological necessity as it was a thrilling activity. “Before these drugs, you wanted some good foreplay,” recalls Randy West, who says he was “big on kissing” in the old days. “Eating pussy always turned me on, but it doesn’t seem like a real necessity now, so there’s a lot of token pussy eating. These guys don’t need a good blowjob. It’s just, ‘Touch it a little bit, stick it in, and off we go.’” Delilah Strong adds, “I want somebody to enjoy a scene with me. I like a guy to look at me and think, *This is a gorgeous girl and we’re about to have the time of our lives*, and to be able to just get an erection naturally. I don’t want it to feel staged or forced. Any time they have to enhance it I think, *It’s gonna be one of those days*.”

Still, the performance enhancers have their supporters. Hay, of L.A. Direct Models, is an ardent Cialis advocate. “Athletes train their body—they have dietary constraints, and they take supplements to enhance performance,” he says. “Professional sex athletes should do the same.”

“With the number of companies and the number of shoots happening every day,” says Jack Venice, “there wouldn’t be enough guys to keep up if every guy wasn’t using some sort of male-enhancement drug.” He says he has used Cialis on almost every one of his 300 shoots, and he considers it necessary. “Maybe in 1982 you would have done two or three scenes on a good week, because there weren’t as many companies,” he says. “If I were only doing two or three a week, I could be pretty turned on to do them because I’m 25 years old, and I’m about as horny as a guy could get,” he says. “But I do 35 scenes a month, one or two a day. It would be pretty hard for somebody to do the number of scenes I do without using anything.”

The enhancers also broaden the actors’ sexual scope. “Guys do stranger things now, things that were hard to do without the pill,” says West, citing the example of “several dicks in somebody’s ass or pussy at the same time.” But Venice notes that these drugs have increased not just ability, but expectations. “Years ago, it was common to wait for a hard-on for 30 to 45 minutes,” he says. “Now, I’ve been on sets where if a guy wasn’t hard within two minutes, they asked him to zip up his pants and leave because there are so many guys who take Viagra, Cialis, or Levitra. Somebody else can always do the job faster.”

Venice’s experience is a perfect example of the pressure performers face from both sides. When he started in the business three years ago, he was told that taking enhancers was expected.

“I didn’t know there was a possibility of doing without it,” he says. “Directors would ask, ‘Do you need some? Did you already take it?’ I assumed it was standard.” But Venice has also faced derision for his reliance on the pills. “Other directors have said, ‘So-and-so doesn’t need a warning. Why do you?’ But I just say, ‘You didn’t hire so-and-so today, you hired me, and I need a warning,’ and usually a few people will be like, ‘He’s right. Shut the fuck up.’”

But if some look down on pill poppers, there is even less regard for those who use Caverject, a drug generally reserved for men who don’t respond to Viagra or Cialis. Caverject is injected into the base of the penis and sometimes causes bleeding or swelling. The drug, which carries a risk of erectile dysfunction if overused, causes both an instant erection and severe apprehension among the user’s costars.

“I hired a guy on Caverject once,” says Joanna Angel, “and every time he lost wood he ran to the bathroom. Then he was like, ‘Okay, we have to shoot now because I just shot up.’ I’m like, *This is retarded. I’m never shooting this guy again*.” Sheridan once performed with a man who used Caverject but she only found out afterward, and she says she would have “freaked out” if it hadn’t been a condom scene. Even the Cialis-dependent Venice ironically remarks that “if it comes to that point where you need Caverject, this probably isn’t the best job for you.”

Another effect of the drug-fueled performance base has been harder times for familiar actors like 54-year-old Ron Jeremy. He doesn’t get the raging hard-ons he used to, but still refuses to take enhancers. “It’s ridiculous,” he says. “I’m sitting on the floor jerking it for all it’s worth, and some guy comes out of the bathroom like, *Boing!* Here’s what I have to compete with now! They’re half my age, good-looking, and their dicks are sticking out before the pants come off.”

Jeremy says that despite his age and round physique, taking drugs would increase his workload. “Seymore Butts told me, ‘If you ever take Viagra, I’ll hire you. Take one pill and I got your very next job. You’ll be the old Ronnie again.’”

Not surprisingly, some regard any antipathy toward these enhancers as hopelessly old-world. “Some of the old-school guys—and there are not many left, but some—try to maintain that kind of macho ‘I don’t need it, you shouldn’t need it to work in this business’ attitude,” Hay says. “But they’re dying out. No one cares. The producers and directors just wanna get their movie shot, and the girls just wanna get their scene shot. They don’t care if a guy has taken Viagra or not, as long as he’s got a hard-on.”

Venice adds that for veterans, even Viagra can’t combat what is perhaps the worst effect of aging—the perception that they’re just old. “Any time you work with a younger girl who’s, like, 18, and say, ‘How do you like it so far?’ she usually says something like, ‘Oh, my God, I had to work with this guy who was 50 years old—he was old enough to be my dad or my grandpa.’”

But to many in porn, these problems may become a thing of the past, since it’s questionable whether a Viagra- or Cialis-fueled career could match the longevity of Jeremy’s or West’s. Holland echoes the feelings of many when she says that Viagra is best used as a crutch on a bad day, but those who can’t fuck without it face a potentially Diggler-like future. “Viagra’s an aid, the espresso in the morning after a long night,” says Holland. “It’s not a way of life. If it’s a way of life, then you ain’t gonna have this life very long, because it’s going to fail you eventually.” ☐

“I do 35 scenes a month, one or two a day,” Venice says. “It would be pretty hard to do the number of scenes I do without using anything.”

splash down

As soon as May 2007 Pet of the Month Andie Valentino stepped into the shower for her photo shoot, she knew she'd found her element—especially since good, clean fun wasn't exactly on the agenda. We hope she doesn't towel off too soon.

Photographs by Misha







"The shower scene was totally spontaneous, but the slippery wet marble made me feel like a sex bunny. All I could think was, *Where's the audience to watch me?*"



Andie

"Photo shoots are mostly play for me. I love figuring out what's going to turn on guys. And once I'm in private looking at the pictures, I remember how turned on / got posing."







"Sex in the shower is exciting, even if sometimes you feel like you're holding on for dear life. You're like, *Oh my gosh, this is so good—but I have to be careful not to fall.*"








"My favorite place to have sex outside the house is in the middle of the woods. The adrenaline rush is the best—you don't know if a bear will attack you or if someone will catch you."







"The ultimate relaxation for me is soaking in a hot tub. I'm an Aquarius—the Water Bearer—so it's natural that I love to get drenched."

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Everything you wanted to know about orgasms but didn't know to ask. By Victoria Zdrek, Ph.D.

Women can experience two types of multiple orgasms. During sequential multiple climaxes, orgasms are experienced two to ten minutes apart, with her arousal level declining and then increasing to another peak. The other type is the serial orgasm, where

a woman experiences successive orgasms without any drop in arousal between them. Sequentials usually result from stimulating different orgasmic areas. For example, you can bring her to her first O by stimulating her clit orally or with your hand, then move to intercourse for

a vaginal encore. Serials are almost always repeated waves of vaginal orgasms. To produce a serial vaginal O through intercourse, you can try to prolong lovemaking for at least ten minutes, varying penile angle and speed and depth of thrust. Changing position and adding anal



For females, masturbation leads to orgasm 95 percent of the time, while only 42 percent of partner sex results in the big O.

fingering, spanking, or a vibrator may encourage successive orgasms as the new sensations ramp up her level of excitement.

You also can stimulate her using the extended-massive orgasm method, invented by sex researchers Steve and Vera Bodansky. Their technique involves prolonged and varied manual stimulation. Lay her on her back with her legs bent and raised. Start by gently stroking her vulva, then slowly rubbing the knob of her clitoris with a lubricated finger, then adding your middle finger, varying speed and pressure depending on what she likes. You can also use your thumb to put some pressure on her vaginal opening. When she feels her orgasm approaching, she should let you know so you can slow down. Then use short, quick strokes to bring her back up. The Bodanskys, who have written several books on sex techniques, stress that both partners should be relaxed—the woman should remain still and focus on deep breathing: in through the nose, out through the mouth. You should also stay relaxed, avoiding strain on your arm and wrist, and take pleasure in the pleasure you're giving.

There is no foolproof method to bringing her off, of course, and no matter how earnest your efforts, she may not reach multiple-orgasmic nirvana. But you'll have fun trying!

For men, the main method of achieving multiples is to separate orgasm from ejaculation. According to a Taoist method, this can be done by pressing the Jen-Mo acupuncture point, a small indentation halfway between the anus and scrotum. When it is pressed just prior to an anticipated ejaculation, the release is reversed and semen is "injaculated" from the prostate. The man still feels the pleasurable sensations of orgasm, but he will maintain an erection.

Some men are able to have "dry" orgasms by contracting their pelvic muscles with sufficient pressure. Exercising your PC muscle, the same one you use to stop the flow of urine, will enhance multiorgasmic potential in both men and women.

Orgasm Solutions

Problem: The gender gap

Roughly 32 percent of women have never experienced an orgasm through intercourse. For females who have, it takes about ten to 20 minutes (but only about four minutes through masturbation). The problem is that around 75 percent of males reach orgasm within 7.3 minutes of penetration.

Solution

Men can learn to delay their orgasm for as long as 20 minutes. They can also use masturbatory foreplay techniques on their partner (similar to the Bodansky method), bringing her close to orgasm before initiating penetration to bridge the gap between the sexes.

Problem: She's faking it

Roughly 72 percent of women and 24 percent of men have reported faking an orgasm. The most common reasons are fatigue, performance anxiety, response anxiety (a desire to please their partner), and simply wanting to get it all over with.

Solution

Encourage her to show you what kind of stimulation she enjoys most. To alleviate her response anxiety, assure her that you really enjoy pleasing her, even if she doesn't come. Or try "paradoxical intention"—tell her to hold back her orgasm as long as possible; chances are, she'll have a more explosive release.

Problem: She's the best she's ever had

Women require significantly less time to reach orgasm by themselves than through intercourse. For females, masturbation leads to orgasm 95 percent of the time, while only 42 percent of partner sex results in the big O.

Solution

Get her to masturbate in front of you so you can learn how she likes to be touched, or engage in mutual masturbation before intercourse.

Problem: She's frigid

Your lover says she's not able to come. She's not alone—about 40 percent of American women report difficulty achieving orgasm.

Solution

The first step is to determine whether her inability to reach orgasm is physical or psychological. In the former case, she may need hormone treatments or other medical interventions; in the latter, you can help her by encouraging her to explore her body—this will often be a turn-on in itself. Most women who are considered "frigid" are able to achieve orgasm through masturbation. Once she figures out the type and amount of stimulation she needs, she can show you how to pleasure her.

Five Ways to Enhance Her Orgasm

1. Breathe it
Have her hang her head off the bed while you make love—the blood rush may enhance her orgasm.

2. Tantalize some change
Try putting a little ice on your mouth while going down on her—a touch of hot or cold feels different.

3. Delayed gratification
Bringing her to peak excitement and then backing off builds sexual tension, which in turn magnifies arousal, so take your time to finish her.



Ask Dr. Z

Down for the Count

My wife and I have been trying to conceive for a few years, and recently I was diagnosed with a low sperm count. My urologist prescribed some medication and I am following his recommendations, but do you know any tricks to maximize the power of my little guys?

Many reasons for low sperm count are physiological, but I assume that your doctor has already taken care of that aspect. You should consider some lifestyle changes: Cigarettes, alcohol, anabolic steroids, and recreational drugs significantly decrease sperm count. Lose any excess weight that may be causing a hormone imbalance. Moderate exercise increases spermatogenesis, but avoid overexerting yourself (particularly with long-distance running and cycling), as this will inhibit sperm production. Wear loose cotton boxer shorts and stay away from hot baths and saunas to avoid overheating

the testicles. Maintain a gap of two to three days between ejaculations, and make love in the early morning, when sperm levels are highest. Here is one piece of advice I doubt you have heard from your doctor: Try to make sure that your wife comes when you make love. When a woman climaxes, the contracting muscles in her vagina generate a pressure change that essentially sucks semen into the cervix. As a result, a woman retains 50 to 90 percent more sperm if she has an orgasm during intercourse.

GETTING TO ME: IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION, A STORY, A SEX TOY FOR ME, OR JUST A (NICE) COMMENT, PLEASE VISIT PENTHOUSE.COM/DRZ, E-MAIL VICTORIA@PENTHOUSE.COM, OR SEND SNAIL MAIL TO DR. VICTORIA ZDROK, PENTHOUSE 2 PENN PLAZA, SUITE 1125, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10121

Lucky Numbers

134 Record for the most orgasms enjoyed by a woman in one hour

16 Record for the most ejaculatory orgasms in one hour by a man

50 Percentage of women, in a recent study, who could not orgasm because their feet were cold, very cold

80 Percentage of women in this same study who achieved orgasm when they were given socks

18 Most common age of first orgasm among women

9.3 hours, total time, according to a German statistician, men experience orgasm during their lifetime

1.4 hours, total orgasm time, according to the same report for an average woman

4 Eye contact
Staring into her eyes during sex may enhance the sense of connection and lead to more satisfying orgasms for both of you.

5 Sensory deprivation
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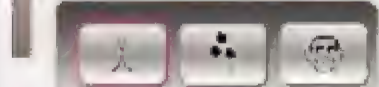
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LIFE ON TOP

I WALK THE SLIME

Slime Ballin'

(Toxxxix) **11111**

Just when we thought there was nothing inventive and fun in porn anymore, director Vincent Voss amps up the fucking with an innovative light show. Aside from the obvious joys of watching such prime filets as Kaiya Lynn (a beautiful Asian gal who turns in a whopper of a scene), Austin Kincaid, and Nikki Benz giving up the pink, Voss throws in illuminated dildos, blacklights, and Day-Glo body paint. The effects, especially the blacklight, add a visual element that neither detracts nor distracts from the business at hand. Carmel Moore and Tiffany Sweet's use of the light-up dildo is smoking in more ways than one, thanks to the judicious use of stage fog. The opener, introducing a trend we'd like to see more of (male porn talent in straitjackets), features foxy Daisy Marie getting schooled in oral and taking a heavy fucking from Mick Blue. The two-disc collector's edition comes with another Toxxxix flick and a collection of triple-penetration scenes that alone would have been worth the investment.

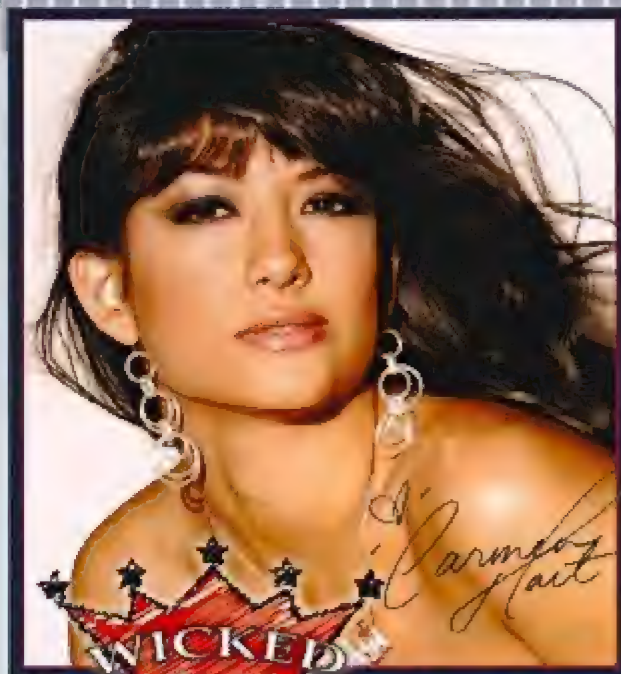
YOUTH IS WASTED ON THE HUNG

Wasted Youth 4

(Red Light District) **11111**

This flick stars badass bitches who smoke cigarettes, dress like whores, and suck a mean cock. Although we often wish that gonzo as an art form would go the way of, well, Hunter S. Thompson, this yanker presses all the right buttons. Lela Star starts things off in supreme bitch mode when she fucks the gardener; their exchange is as funny as it is sexy, and when there isn't something obnoxious coming out of her mouth, there's something just as obnoxious going into it. By the time she's bouncing her tiny ass on the gardener's tool, you know she's ready to get plowed. Cadence Calibre and James Deen play out a voyeur fantasy after watching another couple fuck through a telescope, in a scene made even steamier by the white cotton panties barely visible beneath the shortest plaid skirt we've ever seen. This is a good, utilitarian piece of porn without any bells or whistles to get in the way of your good time. Check these bitches out.

Grab it now
Hold on tight
Pick it up
Worth a look
Hands off



MVP
Most Valuable Performer
Carmen Hart XXXLUS SEX SCENE
winner of the most sexed de Carmen

Penthouse Pick

MVP Carmen

(Wicked Pictures) **11111**

In mainstream pornography, star compilations are (a) a cost-effective way to recycle old product, (b) a way for fans to discover a new obsession-worthy starlet, (c) a convenient way to practically triple the amount of content clogging the nation's porn-shop shelves, or (d) all of the above. The answer is d, of course, but in this case, it's okay with us. We have to admit we've seen little of Carmen Hart's work, and only chose this DVD based on the absolutely stunning box-cover photo. But shortly after popping this baby in, we were hooked. Hart has one of the best-looking pussies we've ever seen, natural tits, a lean body, and the kind of beautiful face that should be the rule in porn—not the exception. Factor in the clit ring and a damn near perfect nose, and Hart is a clear winner. The ten scenes on this disc are on the higher-quality end of the spectrum, showing off a playful sexuality peppered with a bad-girl sensibility that's as refreshing as it is exciting.





ASS TO THE GLASS

My girlfriend Stacy was scheduled to arrive at the airport at 10 P.M. It was her birthday and she knew I always planned something special for her. Stacy is the kind of woman I always wanted—she's smart, hot, and always up for a good time.

I watched her as she stepped onto the escalator. When she reached the landing, I came up behind her and tapped her on the shoulder. She grabbed me and kissed me as if she'd been away for months instead of just one week.

"There's definitely something to be said about sex in a moving vehicle," she said after she'd had a chance to catch her breath. "Now, let's try something else."

We rushed to get her bags and headed for the exit. Outside, I told her to close her eyes and then steered her toward a waiting limo. Leaving the bags for the driver, I helped her climb into the plush seats and opened the bottle of champagne I'd purchased earlier. Once I poured both glasses, I told her she could open her eyes. Thoroughly surprised, Stacy hugged me and asked if we were headed someplace special.

"Eventually," I said as the driver pulled away from the curb. Stacy and I both enjoy having sex in a variety of places and we'd never fucked in a car, so naturally I thought she'd really enjoy screwing in the back of a limo. I had hired the driver to cruise around for a couple of hours and promised him a huge tip for his discretion. With the tinted privacy window closed, the lights off, and the music on, we kicked off our shoes and sank into the limo's cushiony seats. In between hot kisses, we laughed and drank until the champagne was nearly finished.

Then Stacy leaned close to me and started nibbling on my ear while her hand slid slowly from my chest down to my waist. Before she could get her hands into my pants, I turned the tables and started undressing her. I took off her blouse and bra and began teasing her breasts with my tongue, flicking her nipples until they turned into hard little peaks.

When she started to squirm under me, I unzipped her skirt and tugged it down over her legs, along with her panties. My fingers delved between the folds of her pussy and slipped easily into her. She moaned and her muscles clenched around my fingers each time I plunged them in and out. Stacy's eyes were closed, but she was breathing hard and pushing against my hand, trying to get my fingers deeper inside. I drew her nipple into my mouth and stabbed at the hard nub with the tip of my tongue. I could tell she was on the verge of a massive orgasm. All I had to do was press on her clit with my thumb and she came, bucking wildly against my hand.

"There's definitely something to be said about sex in a moving vehicle," she said after she'd had a chance to catch her breath. "Now, let's try something else."

Then she practically ripped off my jeans and briefs and pushed me onto my back. My cock ached for the wet heat of her mouth and tongue. She lowered her head and flicked her tongue over the head of my shaft.

I couldn't wait for her to take me completely into her mouth. Of course, because I was so anxious she took her time, teasing me with fleeting licks as she occasionally leaned forward and squeezed my cock between her tits. Stacy was on her knees, straddling my legs, when it suddenly occurred to me that her ass was smack up against the window! It was nighttime and the windows were tinted, but still—knowing her beautiful ass cheeks were on display upped the thrill level.

But I forgot all about her sweet cheeks when I felt her silky tongue lick a slow path from the base of my cock to the head. Then, with practiced skill, she finally took me in. I'm always amazed when I see her take my hard, seven-inch cock down her throat with such ease and confidence. She slowly pulled back before taking me in deep again. If I didn't do something quick about the sweet torture, it would be over too soon.

I pulled her up toward me for a kiss. With Stacy entwined in my arms, I rolled on top and jammed my cock into her. She moaned into my mouth, wrapped her legs around my waist,

I leaned forward and flicked my tongue against her nipples again. She immediately began to squirm and grind her hips against mine.

and it was on. I held on to the back of the seat and slammed into her again and again. Her head fell back and her breathing quickened; I knew the end was near for her, and at the rate I was going, I wouldn't be far behind.

Maintaining my rhythm, I brought my lips to Stacy's ear and asked, "I'm going to come, Stacy—are you ready for me?"

"Oh, yeah. Come with me!" she cried. I'd held back long enough. I plunged into her one last time and stayed there until the last of my cream blasted into her.

I collapsed and rolled next to her. We spooned for a while before I kissed her neck and asked, "Did you like this part of your birthday gift?"

"You mean there's more to come?" she asked as she pushed her ass back against me, rousing my cock. "I can't wait! Where do we go from here?"

"Oh, that's part of the surprise, Stacy—but if you enjoyed this, you're going to love what comes next," I teased.—*K.S., Georgia*

TEXT APPEAL

Getting a text message from Charlene meant only one thing—she wanted to get laid. I hadn't heard from her in a couple of months, but our relationship is pretty casual: We only communicate when one of us wants to have sex. I met Charlene at a party about a year ago. We started talking and drinking, then made out in a corner. Later that night we had hot, explosive sex in the coatroom! We'd been texting each other ever since. I immediately sent her a message to come on over.

Thirty minutes later, Charlene's car pulled into the driveway. I opened





the door and she came in wearing her usual little trench coat, as if I needed to be reminded of our first encounter. I pulled her to me and we kissed. I held her briefly before untying her belt and opening her coat. Then I stepped back to admire her lingerie selection for the evening. This time she wore a green lace teddy that zipped up the front. I'd never seen anything like it—but she always wore something different when we got together. I always felt as if I were unwrapping a gift when I opened Charlene's trench coat.

I led her into the bedroom and helped her out of her coat. I was all set to unzip her teddy when she said I had to get undressed first. I wasn't wearing much—just a T-shirt and boxers—but I was out of them in a flash and reaching for that zipper again. I grabbed the tassel at the top and pulled it all the way down to her crotch. I'd seen Charlene in all her glory before, but there was something about the zipper that got to me. Maybe it was the way she slowly stroked my already-hard cock while her breasts practically burst free from the teddy, but I nearly came right there in her hand.

Maybe it was the way she slowly stroked my already-hard cock while her breasts practically burst free from the teddy, but I nearly came in her hand.

I bent down to tease her erect nipples with the tip of my tongue before sucking one and then the other into my greedy mouth. Charlene's breasts and pussy seemed to be directly linked. Her head fell back and she moaned, temporarily forgetting about my cock. She held on to my shoulders and I lay her on the bed. I kissed her as I pulled off her teddy. Then I sat back on my heels and told her to spread her legs. One glance revealed she was already incredibly wet. I leaned forward and flicked my tongue against her nipples again. She immediately began to squirm and grind her hips against mine. Then I slid two fingers into her juicy snatch, and she started to pant and pump her hips against my hand. She was ready for me to fill her, but I wanted to prolong the foreplay a while longer.

I slid back, grabbed her ankles, and pulled her down toward the edge of the bed. With my arms wrapped around her legs, I plunged my tongue into her hole and began tongue-fucking her, bringing her to her first orgasm of the night. I let her catch her breath and brought my wet fingers

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to her lips. As she sucked on them, her hands found my cock. She wasn't going to take no for an answer.

Charlene started stroking me and then told me to lie down before taking me into her mouth. I closed my eyes and surrendered myself to her oral talents. As her tongue traced and swirled, I knew I had to make a decision. Charlene's mouth felt great on my cock, but there was only one way I wanted this to end—inside her hot pussy. I pushed her back, positioned myself between her legs, and was about to move forward when she pulled me into her and trapped me with her legs.

I braced my arms on either side of her and began thrusting hard and deep. She cried out for me to fuck her harder. She was so loud that I began to worry about my neighbors.... Well, not really. Her yelling actually spurred me on. I gave it my best, but all too soon our rhythm picked up and we were straining against each other, our cries and moans intermingled as we shared our pleasure.

Afterward, I got up to pour Charlene a glass of wine. But when I returned, she was already zipping up her teddy. I wasn't really surprised. Charlene knows that she's always welcome to spend the night at my place, but she never does. It's an unspoken agreement between us, and so far, it's worked. So I kissed her at the door and helped her fasten her

She slipped off her lacy thong and stuffed it in her purse. This is exactly why I love shopping with Gia—she always makes it exciting and rewarding.

coat. Then she said the same thing she always says to me—"Don't be a stranger, Gary."—*G.I., Washington*

PUBLIC DISPLAY

It was the first day of summer and I couldn't stay inside. It was hot and sunny out, so I did what everyone on the job wanted to do that day—I called my girlfriend Gia and told her to leave work early and meet me at home in an hour. On my way to lunch, I told my assistant that I had several appointments and I wouldn't be back for the rest of the day.

When I got home, there was a note from Gia letting me know she went for a pedicure and would be home around two.

I fixed a sandwich, grabbed a soda, and sat out on the terrace to wait for her. She walked in about 30 minutes later and, as always, the first thing I wanted to do was toss her over my shoulder, take her into the bedroom, and fuck the daylights out of her. Gia is all of five foot three, weighs about 105 pounds, and wears a size zero. She had on my favorite denim mini and a simple white cotton tank top.

"So, what do you think?" she asked as she kicked off her flip-flops and displayed her delicate feet with French-manicured toes.

Okay—so I've got some kind of weird thing for her pretty feet to begin with, but seeing her toes with the white tips really got me going.

"Damn, baby, I love that! Your feet look so sexy!" I said.

"I'm glad you like them," she said. "Would you like to take me shopping and help me pick out a pair of strappy little sandals to really show them off?"

She didn't have to ask twice—20 minutes later, we were in the parking garage of her favorite shoe store.

"And look, honey," she said as she hiked up her skirt. "Just in case I get the chance to show you more than sandals..." She slipped off her lacy thong and stuffed it in her purse. This is exactly why I love shopping with Gia—she always makes it an exciting and rewarding experience.

We headed for the women's section. There were two long rows of sexy sandals to choose from, and I was prepared to watch Gia try on every single pair!

There were lots of little stools in the aisles, and Gia used them for more than just trying on shoes. Nearly every time Gia sat down to try on a pair of sandals, she eased up her skirt and raised one leg, giving me a clear view of her Brazilian-waxed pussy! She tried on thongs, open-toe slides, and sandals in all colors—black, white, gold—in fabric and leather, with sequins, rhinestones, and beads. I was in heaven feasting my eyes on her sexy feet, shapely legs, and bare snatch. Then she tried on a pair of sandals with three-inch heels. Oh, man! I was getting such a hard-on from watching her.

This little game of show-and-tell was making us both hot. We walked the aisles picking out the sexiest footwear we could find. Everything





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about the process was turning me on. I lost count of the number of times she flashed me her pussy or squeezed my cock through my shorts when no one was looking. By the time we finally picked out a pair of black open-toe sandals with towering heels, I was ready to leave the store for someplace more private.

While we waited in the checkout line, I stood close behind Gia with my arms wrapped around her waist. Gia leaned back, letting me support her weight. She could feel me pressing against her ass and her response was to surreptitiously move her hips back and forth, causing more friction than I needed at that point.

Then she whispered something I couldn't hear. I leaned my ear close to her mouth and she repeated, "I'm going to suck your cock when we get back to the car."

Fortunately we were up next or I might have had to leave her in the store. I paid for the shoes and practically dragged her to the car. I opened her door and watched her climb in. Of course, she pulled up her skirt again and gave me another peek at her now-glistening pussy! By the time I sat behind the wheel, Gia had her hand between her legs and was openly masturbating.

"You'd better find a spot soon," she hissed. "I can't wait much longer."

A few minutes later, I found the perfect spot on the top deck of the garage. I backed into a space where we could see the entire lot. My cock was throbbing hard. I barely had it out of my pants before Gia had me in her mouth. She wrapped her hand around the base and began to stroke me as she bobbed her head up and down.

"Oh, fuck, baby—keep that up and you're going to get a mouthful of come!" I moaned. My warning only seemed to make her more determined; she sucked and pumped my cock even faster. Moments later, I couldn't hold back anymore.

"Here it comes!" I cried out as my cock erupted.

Gia moaned with pleasure and swallowed every drop of my come.

"Thanks for taking me shopping, lover," Gia said.

"Oh, you're more than welcome," I said. "And thanks for jacking up the action by showing off your new wax job, driving me crazy, and giving me an excellent blowjob!" I couldn't wait to get home so I could show her just how grateful I was for that shopping trip.—N.R., California ☺



No one—including Michelle Pfeiffer and Halle Berry—has filled the catsuit like Newmar did.

the campy sixties TV show *Batman*, and none of her successors have filled the skintight, metallic-black costume like she did—including Michelle Pfeiffer and Halle Berry. And no one has matched Newmar's lethal combination of decadence, elegance, and raw sex appeal, either.

Born in L.A. to a former Ziegfeld Follies dancer and a teacher/real-estate investor, Newmar launched her career in 1953, playing such appropriately named knockouts as the Gilded Girl in *Serpent of the Nile* (wearing nothing but gold paint), Stupefying Jones in the Broadway production of *Li'l Abner*, and April Conquest in an episode of the classic sixties TV show *The Monkees*.

When she auditioned for the role of Catwoman, Newmar knew next to nothing about the character or the show. Yet she instantly struck the right sultry tone—her every word soaked in innuendo—and established herself as a star, both in the series and in the fantasies of its millions of young male viewers, many of whom were not yet old enough to understand the strange tingling they felt whenever the slinky villainess entered the frame. Continually tempting Batman to explore his dark side, Newmar injected the show with a crackling sexual tension. In one scene, she even proposed to the Caped Crusader. He thought about it, then asked, "What about Robin?" (We told you the series was campy.) "I know," Newmar purred, "we'll kill him."

She would go on to create an extensive body of work, including turns on *The Twilight Zone* and *Star Trek* and multiple film roles, but Newmar made the biggest impact with her iconic feline villainess, turning the character into a fixture of the *Batman* franchise. "I am absolutely stupefied that the audience got it—my sexuality, that is," she once claimed, somewhat unbelievably. "But the audience is right. I'm an all-night pleasure." We don't doubt it for a second. ☐

Julie Newmar

Now that I've (mostly) outgrown my mania for Reese's Pieces and jacking UNICEF boxes, the greatest thing about Halloween is the skimpy, sexy costumes. Those Dorotheas in checkered dresses, high-highs, and five-inch ruby heels; the Little Red Riding Hoods in scarlet miniskirts—well, let's just say they beat the crap out of candy corn.

But the costume that started it all was Catwoman. You'll probably see a dozen Catwomen this October 31, and all of them will pay homage to—and fall short of—the original, Julie Newmar. She played the part on